

# Rudolf Steiner

## ***The Mission of the Archangel Michael***

*The Anthroposophic Press: Spring Valley – New York*

The first six lectures included in this volume were given in Dornach, Switzerland, November 21-30, 1918. They are taken from the original edition that bears the title, *Die Sendung Michaels* (Volume 194 in the Bibliographic Survey, 1961). The final two lectures were given in Munich, West Germany, February 14, and 17, 1918. They are included in the original edition bearing the title, *Mitteleuropa zwischen Ost und West* (Volume 174a in the Bibliographic Survey, 1961). Translated from the German by Lisa D. Monges.

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# *The Mission of the Archangel Michael*

*The Mission of Michael, the Revelation of the Secrets of Man's Being*

Six Lectures of Rudolf Steiner  
Delivered at Dornach, November 21-30, 1919

## I

### The Power and Mission of Michael, Necessity of the Revaluation of Many Values

IN THIS course of lectures I should like to describe the relationship which we, human beings of the present day, may gain to that spiritual power which, as the power of Michael, intervenes in the spiritual and physical events of the earth. It will be necessary to prepare ourselves in today's lecture for this task. We shall need various points of view which will enable human intelligence really to present the various interferences with the just designated power on the background of the symptoms which we may observe in our surroundings. We must keep in mind, if we wish to speak seriously of the spiritual world that we always may look upon the manifestations of the spiritual powers here in the physical world. We try to penetrate as it were, through the veil of the physical world to that which is active in the spiritual world. What exists in the physical world may be observed by everyone; what is active in the spiritual world serves to solve the riddles posed by the physical world. But we must sense the riddles of physical life in the right way. It is important, in connection with these weighty matters, to comprehend in full seriousness what I have said in recent lectures. {See Rudolf Steiner, *Pneumatosophy: The Riddle of the Inner Human Being*. Anthroposophic Press, New York.} It is impossible to link personal world views to a real understanding of that which so vitally concerns not only the whole of humanity, but the whole world. We must free ourselves from merely personal interests. Moreover, we will gain an understanding for the purpose and value of personality in the world if we have freed ourselves from the personal element in its narrower sense.

Now you know that our *Earth* evolution was preceded by another; that we stand within a cosmic evolution. First, you know that this evolution progresses, that it has arrived at a point beyond which it will pass to further, more advanced stages. Secondly, you know that if we consider the world as such, we have to deal not only with the beings which we meet in the earthly sphere, that is, in the mineral, plant, animal, and human kingdoms, but that we have to deal with beings belonging to higher realms which we have designated as the *beings of the higher hierarchies*. If we speak of evolution in its entirety, we have always to consider these beings of the higher hierarchies.

These beings, on their part, also pass through an evolution which we can understand if we find analogies to our own human evolution and to the one which exists in the various kingdoms of the earth. Consider, for example, the following: You know that we human beings have passed through a *Saturn*, *Sun* and *Moon* evolution, we may say that we as human beings who experience ourselves in earthly surroundings have arrived at the fourth stage of our evolution.

Let us now consider the beings directly above our human stage whom we call the Angeloi, the Angels. If we merely wish to show an analogy we may say: these beings, although their form is entirely different from the human, and although they are invisible to physical human senses, are at the evolutionary stage of *Jupiter*.

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Let us now turn to the Archangeloi, the Archangels. They are at the evolutionary stage which mankind will have reached upon Venus. And if we turn to the Archai, the time spirits, to the beings who especially influence our earthly evolution, we find that they have already attained the evolution of *Vulcan*.

Now the significant question arises: If we turn to the beings still higher in rank, to the hierarchy of the so-called *Spirits of Form*, on what stage do we find them? We must answer: They have already passed beyond the stages which we human beings conceive of as our evolutionary stages of the future. They have already passed beyond the *Vulcan* evolution. If we consider our own evolution as consisting of seven stages, which suffices for our present considerations, we must say that the Form of Spirits have reached the eighth stage. We human beings are at the fourth stage of evolution; if we consider the eighth stage we find the Form Spirits.

Now we must not conceive of these successive stages of evolution as existing side by side, but we must conceive of them as interpenetrating one another. Just as the atmosphere surrounds *and* permeates the earth, so this eighth sphere of evolution to which the Form Spirits belong permeates the sphere in which we human beings live. Let us now carefully consider these two stages of evolution.

Let us repeat: We human beings exist in a sphere which has reached the fourth evolutionary stage. Yet we also exist, if we disregard everything else, in the realm which the Form Spirits, around us and through us, have to regard as theirs. Let us now consider human evolution concretely. We have often distinguished the development of the head from that of the human being. The latter we have again divided into two separate parts, the development of the breast and the development of the limbs. Let us disregard this latter differentiation and consider man as having, on the one hand, that which belongs to the development of the head and, on the other, everything that belongs to the rest of the human being.

Now imagine the following: You have here the surface of the ocean, the human being wading in it, moving forward with only his head rising about the water. In this image—of course it is only an image—you have the position of the present-day human being. Everything in which the head is rooted we would have to consider as belonging to the fourth stage of evolution, and everything in which man moves forward, wading or swimming in it, as it were, we would have to designate as the eighth stage of evolution. For it is a peculiar fact that the human being has, in a certain way, outgrown as far as his head is concerned, the element in which the Spirits of form unfold their particular being. In regard to his head, man has become emancipated, so to speak, from the sphere which is interpenetrated by the beings of the Spirits of Form.

Only by thoroughly comprehending this can we arrive at a proper conception of the human being; only then can we understand the special position man has in the world; only then will it become clear to us that when the human being senses the Spirits of Form's creative influence upon him, he does not sense this directly through the faculties of his head, but indirectly through the effect of the rest of his body upon the head. You all know that breathing is connected with our blood-circulation, speaking in the sense of external physiology. But the blood is also driven into the head, creating an organic, vital connection of the head with the rest of the organism. The head is nourished and invigorated by the rest of the body.

We must carefully discriminate between two things. The first is the fact that the head is in direct connection with the external world. If you see an object, you perceive it through your eyes; there is a direct connection between the outer world and your head. If you, however, observe the life of your head as it is sustained by the processes of breathing and blood circulation, you will see the blood shooting up from the rest of the organism into the head and you may say there is not a direct, but only an indirect connection between your head and the surrounding world.

Naturally, you must not say, pedantically: well, the breath is inhaled through the

mouth, therefore breathing also belongs to the head. I have stated above that we have here only an image. Organically, what is inhaled through the mouth does not actually belong to the head, but to the rest of the organism.

Focus your attention upon these two fundamental concepts which we have just gained; focus your attention upon the idea that we stand within two spheres: the sphere which we entered by passing through the *Saturn*, *Sun* and *Moon* evolution and being now within the *Earth* evolution which is the fourth evolutionary stage; then consider the fact that we live within a sphere which belongs to the Form Spirits just as our earth belongs to us, but which, as the eighth sphere, permeates our earth and our organism with the exception of our head and all that is sense activity. If we focus our attention upon these facts we have created a basis for what is to follow.

Yet let me first build a still firmer basis through certain other concepts. If we wish to consider our life under such influences, we must take into account the beings we have often mentioned as cooperating in world events: the Luciferic and Ahrimanic beings. Let us, at the outset, fix our attention upon the most external aspect of these beings. They dwell in the same spheres in which we human beings live. Considering their most external aspect, we may think of all Luciferic beings as possessing those forces which we feel when there arises in us the tendency to become fantastic, when we yield one-sidedly to fancy and over-enthusiasm, when we—if I may express it pictorially—tend to go out with our being beyond our head. If we tend to go out beyond our head, we employ forces which play a certain role in our human organism but which are the universal forces of the beings we call Luciferic. Think of beings formed entirely of those forces within us which strive to pass beyond our head and you have the Luciferic beings which have a certain relation to our human world.

Conversely, think of all that presses us down upon the earth, all that makes us sober philistines, makes us bourgeois, which leads us to develop materialistic attitudes, think of all that exists in us as dry intellect, and you have the Ahrimanic powers.

All that I have described here from the aspect of the soul can also be described from the aspect of the body. One can say, man is always in a midway position between the intentions of his blood and the intentions of his bones. The bones constantly tend to ossify us; in other words, to “ahrimanize” our bodies, to harden us. The blood would like to drive us out beyond ourselves. Expressed in pathological terms, the blood may become feverish. Then the human being is organically driven into phantasms. The bones may spread their nature over the rest of the organism. Then the human being becomes ossified, becomes sclerotic, as nearly everyone does to a certain degree in old age. Then he carries the death-dealing element in his organism, namely, the Ahrimanic element. We may say that everything that lives in the blood tends toward the Luciferic, everything that lives in the bones has the tendency toward the Ahrimanic. The human being is the equilibrium between the two, as he, from the aspect of the soul, has to be the equilibrium between over-enthusiastic and sober philistinism.

Now we may characterize these two kinds of beings from a more profound point of view. Let us observe the Luciferic beings and see what interests they have in cosmic existence. We shall find that their chief interest is to make the world, and above all the human world, desert the spiritual beings whom man must regard as his true creators. The Luciferic beings wish nothing more than to make the world desert the divine beings. Do not misunderstand me: it is not the prime intention of the Luciferic beings to appropriate the world to themselves. From various things I have said about them you can gather that this is not their chief intention; their chief aim is to make the human being forsake his own divine creator-beings, to liberate the world from these beings.

The Ahrimanic beings have a different aim. They have the decided intention to make the kingdom of man and the rest of the earth, subject to their sphere of power, to make mankind dependent upon them, to get control over human beings. While it always has been—and is now—the endeavor of the Luciferic beings to make human beings desert

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what they can feel as the Divine in themselves, the Ahrimanic beings have the tendency gradually to include mankind and everything connected with it in their sphere of power.

Thus, within our cosmos, into which we human beings are interwoven, there exists a battle between the Luciferic beings, constantly striving for freedom, universal freedom, and the Ahrimanic beings, constantly striving for everlasting power and might. This battle permeates everything in which we live. Please hold this fact in mind as the second idea, important to our further considerations. The world in which we live is permeated by Luciferic and Ahrimanic beings, and there exists this tremendous contrast between the liberating tendency of the Luciferic beings and the power tendency of the Ahrimanic beings.

If you consider this whole matter you will have to say to yourselves: I am only able to understand the world if I conceive of it in connection with the number three, the triad. For we have on the one hand the Luciferic, and on the other the Ahrimanic element, and in the middle the human being who, as the third element, in the state of equilibrium between the two, must feel his divine essence. We shall only arrive at an understanding of the world if we base it on this triad and become clear about the fact that human life is the scale-beam. Here the fulcrum; on the one side the scale pan with the Luciferic element, pulling upward; on the other side the scale pan with the Ahrimanic element, pulling downward. To keep the scales in perfect balance signifies the essential being of man. Those who were initiated into such secrets of the spiritual evolution of mankind have always emphasized the fact that it is only possible to understand cosmic existence into which man is placed if it is conceived of in the sense of the triad; that it cannot be understood if it is considered on the basis of any other number. Thus we may say, employing our own terminology: we have to deal with three main factors in cosmic existence, namely: the Luciferic element, representing the one scale of the balance, the Ahrimanic element, representing the other scale of the balance, and the state of equilibrium which represents the Christ Impulse.

Now you may well imagine that it is entirely in the interest of the Ahrimanic and Luciferic powers to conceal this secret of the triad. For the proper comprehension of this secret enables mankind to bring about the state of equilibrium between the Ahrimanic and Luciferic powers; that means, on the one hand, to use the Luciferic tendency toward freedom for the achievement of a wholesome cosmic aim, and on the other hand, to strive to achieve the same with the Ahrimanic element. The human being's normal spiritual condition consists in relating himself in the proper way to this trinity, this triune structure of the world.

For, the influences upon human spiritual and cultural life do have a strong tendency to confuse man in regard to the significance of the triad. We can observe very clearly in modern culture that the conception of this structure according to the triad is almost completely eclipsed by the conception of a structure according to the duad. If we wish to understand Goethe's *Faust*, we must realize, as I have often pointed out, that this confusion in regard to the triad influences even this great cosmic poem. If Goethe, in his day, had had a clear view of these matters, he would not have presented the Mephistophelean power as the only opponent of Faust who drags Faust down, but he would have contrasted this Mephistophelean power—of whom we know that it is identical with the Ahrimanic power—with the Luciferic power, and Lucifer and Mephistopheles would appear in *Faust* as two opposing forces. I have spoken of this here repeatedly. If we study the figure of Goethe's Mephistopheles, we can see clearly that Goethe in his characterization of Mephistopheles constantly confused the Luciferic and Ahrimanic elements. Goethe's Mephistopheles is a figure mixed as it were, of two elements. There is no uniformity in it. The Luciferic and Ahrimanic elements are intermingled at random. I have dealt with this more explicitly in my brochure, *Goethe's Standard of the Soul*.

This confusion which thus plays even into Goethe's *Faust* is based upon the

misconception which has arisen in the evolution of modern mankind—in former times it was different—of putting the duad in the place of the triad when considering the structure of the world; that is, one sees the good principle on the one side, the bad principle on the other: God and the Devil.

Thus we must emphasize the fact that if a person wishes to conceive of the structure of the world in a factual manner, he must acknowledge the triad, the two opposing elements of the Luciferic and Ahrimanic and the Divine element which holds the balance between the two. This has to be contrasted with the illusion which has arisen in mankind's spiritual evolution through the erroneous concept of the duad, of God and the Devil, of the divine-spiritual forces above and the diabolical forces below. It is as though we were to force man out of his position of equilibrium if we conceal from him the fact that a sound comprehension of the world can only result from the proper conception of the triad and if one makes him believe that the world structure is in some way determined by the duad. Yet, the highest human endeavors have fallen prey to this error.

If we wish to deal with this question, we must do it without prejudice, we must enter an unbiased sphere of thinking. We must carefully distinguish between object and name. We must not allow ourselves to be deceived into thinking that by giving a certain name to a being we have at any time experienced and felt this being in the right way.

If we think of those beings which man regards as his own divine beings, we must say: we can feel and sense them in the right way only if we conceive of them as effecting the equilibrium between the Luciferic and the Ahrimanic principles. We can never feel in the right way what we should feel as the Divine if we do not enter upon this threefold order. Consider from this point of view Milton's *Paradise Lost*, or Klopstock's *Messiah* which came into existence under the influence of *Paradise Lost*. Here you have nothing of a real comprehension of a threefold world structure, you have instead a battle between the supposedly good and the supposedly evil, the battle between heaven and hell. You have the mistaken idea of the duad brought into man's spiritual evolution; you have what is rooted in popular consciousness as the illusory contrast between heaven and hell, introduced into two cosmic poems of modern times.

It is of no avail that Milton and Klopstock call the heavenly entities divine beings. They would only be so for man if they were conceived of on the basis of the threefold structure of world existence. Then it would be possible to say that a battle takes place between the good and the evil principles. But as the matter stands, a duad is assumed, the one member of which has the attributes of the good and receives a name derived from the divine, while the other member represents the diabolical, the anti-divine element. What does this really signify? Nothing less than the removal of the divine from consciousness and the usurping of the divine name by the Luciferic principle; so that in reality we have a battle between Lucifer and Ahriman; only, Ahriman is endowed with Luciferic attributes, and the realm of Lucifer is endowed with divine attributes.

You see the far-reaching consequences revealed by such a consideration. While human beings believe they are dealing with the divine and the diabolical elements when contemplating the contrasts described in Milton's *Paradise Lost* or Klopstock's *Messiah*, they are, in reality, dealing with the Luciferic and Ahrimanic elements. There is no consciousness present of the truly divine element; instead, the Luciferic element is endowed with divine names.

Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Klopstock's *Messiah* are spiritual creations which rise out of modern man's consciousness. That which manifests in them lives in the general consciousness of mankind; for the delusion of the duad has entered this modern consciousness, and the truth of the triad has been withheld. The most profound productions of the modern age which are, from a certain point of view, considered among the greatest creations of mankind, and rightly so, are a cultural maya and have sprung from the great delusion of modern mankind. Everything that is active in this

illusory conception is the creation of the Ahrimanic influence, of that influence which in the future will concentrate in the incarnation of Ahriman of which I have already spoken. For this illusory conception in which we live today is nothing but the result of the false world view which springs up everywhere in modern civilization when human beings contrast heaven and hell. Heaven is considered to be the divine element, and hell the diabolical element, while, in truth, we have to do with the Luciferic element called heavenly and the Ahrimanic element called infernal.

You must realize what interests rule in modern spiritual history. Even the concept of the threefold nature of the human organism or the human being in its entirety has in a certain respect been abolished for occidental civilization by the eighth Œcumenical Council of Constantinople in the year 869. I have often mentioned this. The dogma was then established that the Christian does not have to believe in the threefold human being but only in a twofold human being. The belief in body, soul and spirit was tabooed, and medieval theologians and philosophers who still knew a great deal about the true facts had a hard time to circumvent this truth, for the so-called trichotomy, the “membering” of the human being into body, soul, and spirit had been declared a heresy. They were compelled to teach the duality, namely, that man consists of body and soul, and not of body, soul and spirit. And certain beings, certain men know very well that it is of tremendous significance for human spiritual life if the threefoldness is replaced by twofoldness.

We must consider such profound aspects if we wish to understand correctly why in the August number of *Stimmen der Zeit* (*Voices of the Age*) the Jesuit priest Zimmermann draws attention to the fact that one of the recent decrees of the Holy Office in Rome prohibits Roman Catholics from obtaining absolution if they read or possess theosophical writings or participate in anything theosophical. The Jesuit priest Zimmermann interprets this decree in his article in *Die Stimmen der Zeit* by stating that it applies, above everything else, to my Anthroposophy, and that those who wish to be considered true Roman Catholics must not occupy themselves with anthroposophical literature. He quotes one of the main reasons for this, namely, that Anthroposophy differentiates between body, soul and spirit, and thus teaches a heresy opposed to the orthodox belief that man consists of body and soul.

I have mentioned to you before that modern philosophers have adopted this differentiation of body and soul without being aware of it. They believe that they carry on unbiased, objective science; they believe they practice real observation which leads them to the conviction that man consists of body and soul. In truth, however, they are following in the footsteps of this dogma which has found its way into modern spiritual development. What is considered science today is actually completely dependent on such things as have been put into the world in the course of modern human evolution. Do not believe that you will be able with kind words to convert such people who from these quarters slander Anthroposophy; do not believe that you will prevail upon them and call forth their good will toward Anthroposophy. Anthroposophy must make its way in the world through its own force, and not through the protection of any power, be it ever so Christian in appearance. Through inner strength alone can Anthroposophy achieve what it must achieve in the world.

You must realize that the Christ impulse can only be comprehended if one sees in it the *impulse of equilibrium* between the Ahrimanic and the Luciferic principles, if one gives it the right place within the trinity. We may ask: What must one do if one tries to deceive people in regard to the true Christ impulse? One must divert their attention from the true threefold ordering of the world and direct it toward the delusion of the duad which is justified only when we are concerned with the manifest and not when we are concerned with what lies behind the manifest in the sphere of truth.

In such matters we must go beyond mere names. Calling some being or other Christ does not mean that it is the Christ. If one wishes to prevent another human being from

acquiring a true concept of Christ, one need only put the duad in the place of the triad; but if one wishes to point to the Christ impulse in its true meaning, it is necessary that the duad be supplanted by the triad. We need not join the group of people who declare others to be heretics; we need not declare Milton's *Paradise Lost* or Klopstock's *Messiah* to be damnable works of the devil; we may continue to enjoy their beauty and grandeur. But we must realize that such works, in as much as they are the blossoms of popular modern civilization, do not speak of Christ at all but originate from the delusion that everything that is not part of *human* evolution may be considered as belonging, on the one hand, to the realm of the devil and, on the other, to the realm of the Divine. But in reality, instead of dealing with the realm of the Divine we are dealing with the realm of Lucifer. *Paradise Lost* describes the expulsion of man from Lucifer's realm into the realm of Ahriman; it describes the longing of man not for the realm of the Divine, but for the paradise that has been lost, that means, the longing for the realm of Lucifer. You may regard Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Klopstock's *Messiah* as beautiful descriptions of human longing for the realm of Lucifer; this is what you should consider them to be, for this is what they are.

You see how necessary it is to revise certain conceptions which prevail today. If we are serious in our anthroposophical thinking and feeling we are faced, not with insignificant, but with important decisions. We are faced with the necessity of taking very seriously an expression which Nietzsche has often employed, namely the expression: "the revaluation of values." We have to take this very seriously. The achievements of modern man are in great need of revaluation.

This does not mean that we ourselves have to become denouncers of heresy. We constantly perform here scenes from Goethe's *Faust*, and I have, as you know, devoted decades of my life to the study of Goethe. But from my little book, *Goethe's Standard of the Soul*, you can see that this has not blinded me to the false characterization drawn by Goethe in his Mephistopheles. It would be a philistine standpoint, were we to say: Goethe's Mephistopheles is a false conception; let's get rid of him. We should then be behaving like inquisitors. As modern men we must not place ourselves in such a position. On the other hand, we must not be indolently satisfied with the ideas that have entered, as it were, into the flesh and bones of the great masses of people today. Mankind will have to learn a great deal. It will have to transvalue many values.

All this is connected with the mission of Michael in relation to those beings of the higher hierarchies with whom he is connected. In the subsequent lectures we shall show how we may arrive at an understanding of those impulses which radiate from the Michael being into our earthly human existence.

## *The Mission of the Archangel Michael*

### II

#### The Michael Revelation. The Word Becomes Flesh and the Flesh Becomes Spirit

November 22, 1919

I HAVE spoken in the previous lecture of the error which has entered our modern spiritual life and which is very little noticed today. You will have realized from our discussions that by pointing to this error we have arrived at a very important point in our spiritual-scientific considerations. It is imperative for a sound development of the



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spiritual life of mankind that there be clarity in this matter. I have drawn your attention to such products of culture as Milton's *Paradise Lost* or Klopstock's *Messiah*, which have sprung from the general popular thinking of the last few centuries. But I have also drawn your attention to the fact that just through such artistically as well as spiritually outstanding products of culture we can see the dangers that are facing man's soul life if he fails to realize that it is impossible to arrive at a true and adequate concept of spirit, a true concept of Christ, as long as he imagines that the structure of the world and the spirit can be grasped through the symbol of the duad. By differentiating only according to the duad — on the one hand the good, on the other the evil — people committed the error of including on the side of evil all that we designate as the Luciferic and the Ahrimanic element. But they did not realize that they had jumbled up two cosmic elements. Thus it has come about that the Luciferic element was shifted to the side of the Good; in other words, people were of the opinion that they revered the Divine, recognized the Divine, spoke by name of the Divine, whereas, in reality, they intermixed the Luciferic with the Divine element. Hence the difficulty in our time of arriving at a pure concept of the Divine and a pure concept of the Christ impulse in human and world evolution. Through the culture of the centuries we have become accustomed, because of the acknowledgment of this duad, to speak, on the one hand, of the soul element, on the other, of the bodily or corporeal element, and we have lost the connection between the thoughts which relate us to the soul-spiritual element and the thoughts which relate us to the bodily element. Thinking, willing, feeling are little more than sounding words to people of the present day; and this is particularly true of modern psychology that is taught in our universities. It does not arrive at real inner conceptions of the soul element, filled with content. On the other hand, people speak of the de-spiritualized material element, devoid of soul, and they hammer, as it were, at this external, rigid, stony-hard, soulless material element and are unable to build a bridge from it to the soul.

The all-pervading spiritual and the corporeal which is at the same time spiritual have fallen apart into two elements. Mere theories will not build a bridge between the bodily and the spiritual. And since this is not possible, all scientific thinking has taken on the character of a schism between the bodily and the spirit or soul element. We might express it thus: on the one hand, the various creeds have resorted to pointing to the spiritual element without being in a position to show how this spiritual element takes hold of the bodily-corporeal element; on the other hand, a soulless knowledge, a soulless observation of the body is unable to look through the bodily processes and perceive the spirit-soul element governing them. Anyone who surveys from this point of view the natural-scientific world conception as it developed in the course of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century will have to say to himself: all that pertains to this world conception is a result of that which has just been characterized. In order to understand fully the illusion which today covers up reality, we must first establish this reality. This we shall be able to do as a result of much that has been discussed here at length. Today the human being is considered a single undivided being, regardless whether we are speaking of soul or of body. From the soul aspect he is considered a uniform being; from the bodily aspect he is considered a uniform being. Yet you will have gathered from our discussions that in man there exists, above everything else, the great contrast between the head formation and the rest of the human organism. This latter part of the human body could be further divided, but for the moment let us consider it as a unity. If we make inquiry into the evolution of man, the inquiry in regard to the head formation must be different from that in regard to the rest of the body.

If we focus our attention upon the head formation, from a purely bodily aspect, in as far as this head formation contains the organism for sense perception or for thinking, we have to look far back into the cosmic evolution of man. What finds its expression today in the human head formation has been gradually developed and transformed. Its

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development has gone on through ancient *Saturn*, *Sun* and *Moon* and has continued during the *Earth* evolution. But this is not the case with the rest of the human body. It would be entirely wrong to look for a uniform evolutionary history of the whole human being. We may say (Dr. Steiner draws a diagram): The head formation points back to the previous planetary stages of our *Earth*: *Moon*, *Sun*, *Saturn* evolution; the development which has found its conclusion in the human head reaches far back. But if we add to this all that belongs to the rest of man, we need not go back as far as the *Saturn* evolution. The chest formation may be traced back as far the *Moon* evolution; the limbs have been added to the human being only during the *Earth* evolution.

We consider the human being in the right way only if we make the following comparative observation. But please, take it only as a comparison.

You can easily imagine, hypothetically, that through some sort of organic conditions in the cosmos, through some conditions of adaptation connected with conditions of inner growth, the human being might put forth new limbs. You would not then trace back the entire human form to a previous evolution, but you would say: Man, as an evolving being, has to be traced back; but this or that limb has only been added at a certain point of time. The reason for our begin tempted not to think in this way in regard to the head and the rest of the human organism is that with respect to the outer spatial size of man the rest of the human organism is larger than the head. The truth, however, is that the head formation reaches furthest back in evolution, while the rest of the human form was added later. If we wish to speak of a connection of man with the animal world in regard to evolution, we can only say: The human head can be traced back to an earlier animal formation. The human head is a transformed animal shape, a greatly transformed animal shape.

At a time when animals did not yet exist, the human being, under completely different physical conditions, had an animal form. Animals have developed only later. That part of the human being, however, that had an animal form has become what is today the human head, and that which has been added to the head as the rest of the human organism has been added at a time when the simultaneous development of the animals occurred. Thus it has nothing to do with an actual descent from the animal. We must really state the following: The seemingly most noble part of the human being, his head, points us back to the animal; in regard to the head the human being himself had formerly a kind of animal form. But the rest of our organism we received as an organic addition to the head at a time of cosmic evolution in which the parallel development of the animals took place.

In a certain respect our head has become our organ of thinking. Our organ of thinking is that part of us which, if we may use the expression, has animal descent; a strange animal descent, to be sure. If you look at a human head today, you will not at once discover anatomically the traits that point back to the animal form. Yet upon closer investigation and with the proper interpretation of the forms of the head organs you will recognize them as transformed animal organs.

In considering all this, we must at the same time mention that the transformation of the head from the animal form to the human form came about through the fact that the human head had already entered a retrogressive evolution. That which in earlier states of evolution was full of vitality and life is, in the human head, already in the process of dying. I once stated the following: If we human beings were only head, we could never live, we would be continuously dying, for the organic processes that take place in the head through the forces of the head itself are not life processes but death processes. The human head is continually quickened to life by the rest of the organism. The head owes to the rest of the organism its participation in the general life of the organism. If the head were simply to rely upon those forces for which it is organized, namely the forces of sense perception and thinking, it would be continually dying. Its continuous tendency is to die; it has to be constantly revitalized. If we think, if we perceive with our

senses, there takes place in our head, in our nervous system and its connection with the sense organs, a process that is the opposite of an ascending process of life and growth. For if such a life process took place there, we would fall into deep sleep, we would never be able to think clearly. Only through the fact that death constantly pervades our head, that a continuous retrogressive evolution is going on there and the organic processes are constantly cancelled, do thinking and sense perception take place in our head.

Whoever in a materialistic fashion attempts to explain thinking and sense perception by means of the brain processes does not know at all what processes occur in the head; he believes the processes occurring there may be compared with the processes of organic growth. This is not the case. The processes that run parallel to sense perception and thinking are breaking down processes, processes of destruction. The organic, the material, must first be broken down, must first be destroyed; then above the organic process of destruction the thinking process arises.

You see, these matters are conceived of by humanity today in such a way that the attempt is made to explain their nature externally. The human being thinks, he perceives with his senses; but he knows nothing about that which takes place simultaneously in his organism; this remains completely in the unconscious. Only through the processes which I have described in my book, *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and Its Attainment* (Anthroposophic Press, New York,) is it possible gradually to rise to a knowledge which does not merely live in what today is called, in a mere word-sense, the soul element, namely sense perception and thinking. If a soul undergoes the development described in my book, it can yield on the one hand to thinking, to sense perception, and simultaneously perceive what happens in the brain; it then does not perceive a growth process but a breaking down process which has continually to be compensated by the rest of the organism.

You see, this is the tragic phenomenon accompanying a real knowledge of the activity of the head: there is no unfolding of organic processes in the head to be enjoyed by the clairvoyant when he thinks, when he perceives with his senses; on the contrary, he has to familiarize himself with a process of destruction. He must also familiarize himself with the fact that the materialistically inclined person supposes such processes to take place in the human head which cannot possibly take place when man thinks or perceives with his senses. Materialism must suppose just the opposite of the truth.

Thus, in the human head we are concerned with an evolution out of the animal, but with an evolution already retrogressive; with a breaking down process. The rest of our human organism is in a progressive evolution, and we must not believe that it has no part in the soul-spiritual element and its experience in man. Not only is our blood constantly sent up from the rest of the organism into the head, but also there continually rise into the head those soul-spiritual thought forms from which the world and our organism are woven. These soul-spiritual thought forms are not yet perceived by the human being in his normal state, but the time has come when man has to begin to perceive what arises out of his own being as thought forms. As you know, we do not sleep only from the moment of falling asleep to the moment of waking up; with a part of our being we sleep the whole day through. We are awake only in regard to our thinking and sense perceiving, we dream in regard to our life of feeling; we are sound asleep in regard to our life of willing. For we know only of the thoughts and ideas of our volition; we know nothing of the process of willing. The activity of our will takes place just as unconsciously as our sleep life from the moment of falling asleep to the moment of waking up. But if we ask: By what path alone can knowledge of the Divine reach the human being? we cannot point to the path through the head, through sense perception and thinking, but only to the path that leads through the rest of our organism. We have to deal here with the great and mighty mystery that man's head has developed through long stages of evolution and that gradually the rest of his organism was added; that the head has already started on a retrogressive evolution and that man can only experience

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the Divine through the rest of his organism, not through the head. For you see, it is important to realize that through the head only the Luciferic beings spoke to man.

We may say that man received the rest of his organism in addition to the head in order that the Gods might speak to him. At the beginning of the Bible we do not read: God sent a *ray of light* to man and he became a living soul, but we read: God breathed the living breath into man and he became a living soul. Here it is recognized that the divine impulse reached the human being through an activity that is not of the head.

From this it will become clear to you that this divine impulse could at first come to man only in a kind of unconscious clairvoyance or, rather, through the comprehension of what was given through unconscious clairvoyance. If you consider the Old Testament you will find that it is the result of unconscious clairvoyance (we know this from former discussion). Those who helped in bringing about the Old Testament were conscious of this fact. I cannot describe to you today how the Old Testament came into existence, but I should like to point out to you that we have repeatedly dealt with these matters, and that the teachers of the ancient Hebrew people were conscious of the fact that their God had spoken to them not through direct sense perceptions, not through ordinary thinking, not through that of which the head is the mediator, but that their God had spoken to them through dreams, not ordinary dreams, but dreams permeated by reality. God spoke to them in moments of clairvoyance, as when he spoke to Moses out of the burning bush. And when the initiates of this ancient time were asked about the way in which they received the divine calls they answered: the Lord whose name is ineffable speaks to us; but he speaks to us through his countenance. And the countenance of their God they called *Michael*, that spiritual power who belongs to the hierarchy of the Archangeloi. They felt their God as remaining unknown even behind the experiences of the clairvoyant; but when the clairvoyant, through the inner strength of his soul, raised himself to his God, then Michael spoke to him. But this Michael spoke only to men if they were able to transport themselves into a state of consciousness different from the ordinary, if they were able to transport themselves into the state of a certain clairvoyance in which they became conscious of that which works and lives in the human being during the period between going to sleep and awaking, or through the will which remains subconscious and is in the sleep state even during waking day consciousness.

Thus in ancient Hebrew occultism, the Yahve-revelation was called the revelation of the night; the Michael-revelation, through the Michael-revelation, was felt as the revelation of the night. Thus, on the one hand, man looked into the world and saw what he could receive through sense perception and through human intelligent thinking, and he said to himself: the knowledge that comes to the human being on this path does not contain the Divine. If man, however, develops another state of consciousness, then the countenance of God, Michael, speaks to him and reveals the secrets that relate to the human being; his revelation builds a bridge between the human being and those powers which cannot be perceived in the external sense world, which cannot be thought out by the brain-bound intellect.

Thus we must say: The human beings of the pre-Christian age directed their gaze, on the one hand, toward sense knowledge which was their guide in their earthly undertakings and, on the other hand, toward that knowledge which the human being would only possess in ordinary consciousness — he did not possess it — if this consciousness were to remain awake also during the period of sleep. During these ancient times of the Old Testament people knew that the human being is in the environment of spiritual beings during his waking hours, but that these spiritual beings are not his creator beings, but the Luciferic beings. The beings which mankind felt to be the divine creator beings were active in man from the moment of falling asleep to awakening and also in that part of his nature which sleeps during the day. In the time in which the Old Testament originated Yahve was called the Ruler of the Night, and Michael, the countenance of Yahve, was called the Servant of the Rule of the Night.

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And the people of that time referred to Michael when they referred to the prophetic inspirations through which they received knowledge which was greater than that of the sense world.

Which consciousness is concealed behind all this? That consciousness which has grown out of the sphere of existence in which those powers which include Yahve have their being, whereas the human head formation is surrounded by Luciferic beings. The fact that the human being through his head, as it reaches above the organism, has turned to the Luciferic beings was a secret known in all ancient temples and it was a secret with which man came very close to the truth. It was known that, as the head rises above the human organism, Lucifer also rises above it. The power which brought the human head out of the animal form into its present shape is a Luciferic power; and the power which man must feel as Divine must stream up into his head from the night condition of the rest of his organism. This was the situation in regard to man's knowledge in pre-Christian times.

Then the Mystery of Golgotha entered Earth evolution, and we know that it signifies the union of a super-earthly Being with the *Earth* evolution of man through the body of Jesus of Nazareth. Through the Death on Golgotha the Being Whom we call the Christ has united Himself with the human earth being. What did this signify for *Earth* evolution? Through this event, *Earth* evolution first received its real meaning. The earth would not have its meaning if man were to develop on this earth with his senses and the intellect bound to the head which are of Luciferic origin, if he were to perceive the world of light streaming down from sun and stars upon the earth, but if he were obliged to remain in the sleep state in order to perceive the Divine. Under these conditions the earth would never have attained its meaning, for the waking human being and the earth belong together. The sleeping human being is not conscious of his connection with earthly existence. Through the fact that the Christ Being has lived in a human body which has passed through death, *Earth* evolution has taken a forward bound. The whole *Earth* evolution has acquired a new meaning. The possibility has arisen for the human being gradually to be able to know his divine creator powers also during the day, during ordinary waking life, that is, in his ordinary state of consciousness. That people are still in error today concerning this matter is caused by the fact that the time that has elapsed since the Mystery of Golgotha has not yet sufficed to lead man to a perception, during waking life, of that world which the prophets of the Old Testament were able to behold in those times which they experienced as permeated by revelations of Yahve, their ruler of the Night, and of his countenance, Michael. A period of transition was needed. But with the close of the nineteenth century — all oriental wisdom points to the importance of this close of the nineteenth century, although from a completely different point of view — with the end of the nineteenth century the time has come when human beings must recognize that within them the latent faculty is ready to be awakened which is able to behold, through day-revelation, that which in earlier times was transmitted in night-revelation through Michael.

A time of great error, however, had to precede this, a night of cognition, as it were. I have often said that I do not agree with those who constantly maintain that our time is a period of transition. I know quite well that every time is a period of transition, but I do not want to stop short at such formal, abstract definitions, for the point is that one should indicate clearly of what the transition of a particular time consists. The transition in our time lies in man's need to recognize that what formerly was obtained in night-knowledge we must now obtain through day-knowledge. In other words: Michael was the revealer through the night and in our age he must become the revealer during the day. From being a spirit of night Michael must become a spirit of day. For him the Mystery of Golgotha signifies the transformation from a spirit of night into a spirit of day.

This knowledge which should make its way among human beings much faster than we believe today had to be preceded by a great error, in fact, by the greatest error imaginable in mankind's evolution, in spite of its being still considered an important and

essential truth by many people today. The origin of the human head has become completely hidden from modern mankind; the Luciferic spirituality connected with the human head has become completely veiled. The human being, as I said, was considered a unity, also in a bodily respect. The question of his descent was raised, and the reply was given that man descended from the animal; while, in truth, only that which is Luciferic in man stems from the animal. That part of man, however, through which his divine creators spoke to him in earlier ages during his sleep state only came into existence as an appendage to the human head, while the animal came into existence side by side with it.

Everything was mixed together, as it were, and man was said to have descended from the animal. This is something like a “penalty” of knowledge which arose for mankind. One must give the word “penalty” a somewhat changed interpretation, to be sure.

Whence comes the notion of man's descent from the animals, whereas the truth consists of the facts we have stated in regard to the descent of the head and the rest of the human organism? Who inspired the human being with the fictitious belief that the whole of man descended from the animal?

The theory of man's descent from the animal is an Ahrimanic inspiration; it is of purely Ahrimanic character. To the obscuring of the wisdom which points to the human head as a Luciferic formation, we owe the delusion that man descends from the animal. In failing to comprehend the descent of the human head in the right way man also failed to grasp the other facts in the right manner. Thus the opinion crept into human thinking that man, as a totality, is related to the animal. The world conception of our modern civilization became permeated by the erroneous idea that the human head is the noblest part of man, and it was contrasted by the rest of his organism, just as the good in the world is contrasted by evil — heaven by hell — a duad instead of a triad. The truth is that what man accomplishes in the world by means of his head he owes to the wisdom of the universe, but to the Luciferic wisdom, and that this Luciferic wisdom must gradually be permeated by other elements.

After mankind's evolution had passed through the *Saturn*, *Sun* and *Moon* states and the *Earth* evolution had begun, that spiritual power which we call the Michael power organized the Luciferic nature into the human head formation. “And he cast his opposing spirits down upon the earth,” that is, through this casting down of the Luciferic spirits, opposing Michael, man became permeated by this reason, by that which springs from his head.

Thus it is Michael who sent his opponents to man in order that, by receiving this opposing Luciferic element, man might receive his reason. Then the Mystery of Golgotha entered human evolution. The Christ Being passed through the death of Jesus of Nazareth and united Himself with the evolution of mankind.

The time of preparation has passed. Michael himself, in the supersensible worlds, has participated in the results of the Mystery of Golgotha. Since the last third of the nineteenth century Michael occupies a unique position in the evolution of humanity. The first thing that must occur through the right understanding of man's relation to Michael is the fathoming of such secrets as the one we have endeavored to present today concerning the human head and the rest of the human organism.

The essential thing is for human beings to see that since they did not recognize the true origin of the head they were certain to fall into delusion about the origin of the whole human being. Because they refused to conceive of the Luciferic formative activity that took place in the human head, they fell a prey to the delusion that the human head had the same origin as the rest of the human being. Mankind must penetrate these mysteries. It must, boldly and courageously, face the knowledge that through taking hold of new divine mysteries it must in its inner life improve all that is given to it through mere insight of the head, through mere human, earthly wisdom or cleverness. And first

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of all, the great error must be corrected which has preceded the turning point, the error which lies in the materialistic interpretation of the evolutionary theory of the descent of the whole human being from the animal.

This will be the only way of arriving at a perception of man which does not see, on the one hand, merely the spirit-soul element, living in a body, as it were, and a soulless body, on the other hand; but which beholds the concrete-spiritual which works, although in a Luciferic manner, in the human head, the concrete-spiritual which works in the whole human being, opposed, however, by the Ahrimanic nature in the organism apart from the head.

Speaking in imaginations, we may point back to the fact that the Luciferic element was incorporated in man through the Michael impulse. Through that which Michael has become, the Ahrimanic element must now, in turn, be taken from man. Seen from the aspect of outer science, the truth about man appears to consist of anatomical and physiological knowledge, or that which confronts us as outer sense observation. We must become capable of looking at the human being in such a way that we can see in his every fiber the concrete-spiritual being together with the bodily element. We must become aware that the blood which flows in the living human being is not the same as the blood we draw off, but that the blood flowing in the living human being is permeated by spirit in a special way. We must learn to know the spirit that pulses through the blood. We must learn to know the spirit that pulses through the nervous system just when the latter passes through a phase of breaking down, and so forth. We must become able to see the spiritual element in every single expression of life.

Michael is the spirit of strength. As he enters human evolution he must bring it about that we do not consider on the one hand abstract spirituality and on the other materiality which we listen to with the stethoscope, which we cut up, and of which we have not the slightest inkling that it is only an externally manifesting form of the spiritual; Michael must permeate us as the strong power which can look through the material and see the spiritual in matter. The Evangelist pointed to an ancient stage of human consciousness and he said: In this ancient time the Word lived in a spiritual way; but the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. The Word united with the flesh and the Michael revelation preceded this event. It is processes in human consciousness that are indicated here. The reverse process must now begin which consists in adding another word to the word of the evangelist. We must acquire the power in our consciousness to see how the human being receives that which out of the spiritual worlds has united itself with the earth through the Christ impulse and which must unite itself with mankind in order that mankind shall not perish with the earth. We must make sure that man takes the spiritual not only into his head but into his whole being, that he permeates himself with the spiritual. Only the Christ impulse can help us with this, the Christ impulse in the interpretation of the Michael impulse. Then to the Evangelist's words these may be added: "And the time must come when the flesh will again become the Word and learn to dwell in the realm of the Word."

It is not an invention by a later writer when, added at the conclusion of the Gospel, we read that much has been left unsaid. By this means attention is drawn to that which can only gradually be revealed to mankind. Those who maintain that the Gospels must remain as they are and must not be touched understand them very little. They must be interpreted according to the words of the Christ Jesus — I have mentioned this repeatedly —: "I am with you every day even to the end of the earth cycles." That means: "I have revealed Myself to you not only during the days in which the Gospels were written, I will speak to you always through My day spirit, Michael, if you seek the way to Me. Through the continuous Christ revelation you may add to the Gospels that which was not known in the Gospel of the first millennium but which can be known in the Gospel of the second; and new things may be added during the millennia to come." What is written in the Gospel is true: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." It is, however, just as true that we must add the

revelation: “And the flesh of man must again become spiritualized that it may be able to dwell in the kingdom of the Word in order to behold the divine mysteries.” The Word becoming flesh is the first Michael revelation; the flesh becoming Spirit must be the second Michael revelation.

## *The Mission of the Archangel Michael*

### III

Michaelic Thinking. The Knowledge of Man as a Supersensible Being. The Michael Path and the Deepest Impulses of the Social Question

November 23, 1919

THE DAY before yesterday I spoke to you about the fact that we, as members of the human race, live in a sphere which we may designate as the fourth sphere of evolution. We know that the *Earth* evolution has gradually developed out of the *Saturn* evolution; the *Saturn* evolution was followed by the *Sun* evolution, this in turn by the *Moon* evolution, out of which, finally came the *Earth* evolution. If we keep in mind these four sequential formations of the earth planet to which, of course, mankind as such belongs, we must only consider man in so far as he is a head-being. In doing so we must realize that the designation “the head of man” is the symbolic expression of everything that belongs to human sense perception, to human intelligence, of all that in turn flows over into social life through human sense perception, as an intelligent being, must be included in this symbolic expression. Thus, if I say: “man as a head-being,” this is spoken symbolically and refers to everything I have just mentioned.

We speak lightly of the fact that we, as physical human beings, live in the surrounding atmosphere. We must realize that this atmosphere belongs to us. For, is it not true that the air which is now within us was a short time ago outside us? We are not thinkable as human beings outside this atmosphere. But we have become accustomed to believe that men of earlier periods spoke about subjects like the air in the way modern mankind speaks about them. This, however, was not the case. We find it queer if we say that just as we walk in the air so we walk in a sphere which contains the conditions for our existence as sense-beings, intelligent beings, in short, that we possess all that can be symbolically expressed, as has been stated, by virtue of our existence as head-beings. Now, I have told you that this is only one of the spheres in which we exist, for we live in various spheres. Let us now progress in our considerations to a sphere of practical import for mankind and focus our attention upon the fourth sphere in which we now live by virtue of three evolutionary states having preceded our *Earth*. Let this be characterized by this circular plane (Dr. Steiner makes a drawing on the blackboard) in which we live as in our fourth sphere of evolution. Besides this, we live in yet another sphere of evolution through the fact that this other evolutionary sphere belongs to the spiritual beings that are our creators, just as this fourth sphere belongs to us. If we disregard the human being for a moment and consider those beings which we always have called, in the order of the hierarchies standing above us, the Spirits of Form, the Creative Form Beings, then we shall have to say that we, as human beings, shall only reach the sphere which we ascribe to our Divine Creator Beings when the Earth has passed through three further stages of evolution, which you will find designated in my *Occult Science* [Rudolph Steiner, *Occult Science, an Outline*, Anthroposophic Press, New York] as *Jupiter* stage, *Venus* stage and *Vulcan* stage, and



shall have reached the eighth stage. Thus these Creative Spirits are at the stage which we human beings shall have reached after the *Vulcan* evolution. This is their sphere which belongs to them just as the fourth sphere belongs to us. But we must think of these spheres as being inserted into one another, as interpenetrating one another. Thus, if I designate the sphere of which I have just spoken as the eighth sphere, we do not live only in the fourth but also in this eighth sphere through the fact that our Divine Creators live in this sphere together with us.

If we now hold this eighth sphere in view, we find living there not only our Divine Creator Spirits, but also the Ahrimanic beings. Thus by living in the surroundings of the eighth sphere we live together with the Ahrimanic beings. In the fourth sphere, the Luciferic beings live together with us. This is the situation concerning the distribution of these spiritual beings. We are able to go into details regarding these things only if we know how we ourselves are related to the corresponding surroundings of this sphere.

Thus, it is revealed to the perception of initiation science that we are perceiving and intelligent beings by virtue of our living in the fourth sphere of our evolution. But we must never forget that the Luciferic power influenced this intelligence in which we must always include sense perceptions. This Luciferic power is intimately connected with the special kind of intelligence which the human being today considers his very own and which he prefers to employ. Yet, man was endowed with this intelligence only through the fact that higher being of whom I have spoken to you as the Michael-being has cast the Luciferic beings down into the sphere of men, into the fourth sphere of men. Through this the impulse of intelligence arose in human beings.

You can feel what this impulse of intelligence signifies in mankind if you direct your attention to the impersonal element of present-day human intelligence. You know that we human beings have many personal interests, and we are individualized in regard to them. But his individualization comes to a halt before intelligence. As far as intelligence and logic are concerned, all human beings possess the same; we count upon this common possession. We would not have this common possession if the Luciferic influence, mediated by Michael, had not been exerted upon mankind.

We comprehend one another in this simple fashion only by virtue of our having this common intelligence which originates in the Luciferic spirituality. This Luciferic spirituality arose through Michael's having permeated and influenced human beings with the being of Lucifer. These Luciferic influences developed further in human historic evolution. Alongside of them, much else has been developed in the human being. But today this Luciferic spirituality which we call our intelligence is still considered by many people the most distinguished faculty of man.

You must, in order to come to greater clarity in this matter, direct your soul gaze upon something else which may bring human beings together over the whole earth once it has spread. This is the *Christ* impulse. But the *Christ* impulse is something different from the intelligence impulse. The intelligence impulse is of coercive nature. You cannot make the intelligence of mankind your personal affair. You cannot suddenly resolve to decide in a personal way what has to be decided by intelligence without appearing insane within social life relationships. Yet, on the other hand, you cannot gain any relation to the Christ impulse other than a personal one. Nobody can interfere with another person's way of relating himself to the Christ. This is an entirely personal matter. But through the fact that the Christ has passed through the Mystery of Golgotha and has united Himself with the *Earth* evolution the situation has become such that, regardless of how many human beings, independently from one another, make the Christ impulse their personal affair: the Christ impulse, through its very nature, will become the same for everyone. That means, human beings are brought together through something which every one of them makes his own affair, not coercively as in the case of intelligence, but through the fact that precisely through the Christ impulse itself the relationship of every human being to the Christ forms itself in such a way — if it

forms itself rightly — that it is the same in every human being. This, you see, is the difference between the intelligence impulse and the Christ impulse. The Christ impulse may be the same for all mankind and yet is a personal matter for every individual human being. Intelligence is not a personal affair.

Now, what was the situation into which the Christ impulse entered? We can answer this from indications which I have already given. We know that the evolution of the head is retrogressive. In regard to his head the human being finds himself in a process of dying. We may thus point to the following cosmic fact: Michael has pushed the Luciferic hosts down into the realm of mankind; they took up their abode in the human head, but in the human head in its state of gradual dying.

These Luciferic beings began to fight against this dying of the human head. And here we touch a well-known secret of human nature, a secret known in the most varied forms, but which is almost completely concealed from modern man. In regard to this divine evolution, man carries in his head a continual death process; but paralleling this continual process of dying is a kindling of life on the part of Lucifer. It is Lucifer's constant endeavor to make our head as living as is the rest of our organism. Seen from the organic aspect, Lucifer would turn mankind away from its divine direction, were he to succeed in making the human head as living as is the rest of the organism.

This is precisely what the divine direction of human evolution has to turn against. Man must remain united with *Earth* evolution so that he may continue on through *Jupiter*, *Venus* and *Vulcan* evolution. If Lucifer were to reach his goal, man would not continue on his destined path; on the contrary, he would be made part of a cosmos which is intelligent through and through.

Physiologically speaking, it is Lucifer's constant endeavor to send the life forces out of the rest of our organism into our head. Psychically speaking, Lucifer is constantly endeavoring to give to the content of our intelligence which merely comprises thoughts and images the character of substance. What I have stated above from the physical point of view I now state from the point of view of the soul when I say that Lucifer has the constant tendency to give a real substantial content to that which we form as an image in our spirit — anything of an artistic form, for instance; that is, he has the tendency to permeate our thought contents with ordinary earthly reality. If he were to succeed he would bring it about that we as human beings would forsake reality and fly over into a thought reality which would be reality and not mere thoughts. This tendency of letting our fantasies become realities is connected with our human nature, and the greatest efforts imaginable are made to turn our human fantasies into realities.

Now, everything that exists in mankind as causes of internal diseases is connected with this Luciferic tendency. To see through the work of Lucifer in regard to the driving of the vital forces into the dying forces of the human head means, in truth, to be able to diagnose all internal diseases. Scientific-medical development must strive to build its knowledge upon this Luciferic element. To give this impulse belongs to the tendencies of the Michael influence entering our human evolution.

The Ahrimanic influence is the reverse of the Luciferic tendency. It makes itself felt from the eighth sphere out of which the rest of our organism, exclusive of the head, is fashioned; this organism is full of vitality through its very nature. Into these forces of vitality the Ahrimanic powers endeavor to send the forces of death which properly, in the divine process of evolution, belong to the head. Thus, out of the eighth sphere the forces of death come to us through Ahriman as intermediary. This, again, is spoken of from the physical aspect.

Speaking from the soul aspect, I would have to say: everything that sense its influence into us out of the eighth sphere acts upon the human will, not upon intelligence. Wish, desire underlie human willing; all willing contains a certain amount of desire. It is Ahriman's constant endeavor to insert the personal element into the desire-nature which underlies the willing; and through the fact that the personal element is

concealed in our desire-nature, our human soul-will activity bears the imprint of our gradual approaching the moment of death. Instead of permitting ourselves to be permeated by divine ideals and letting them enter our desires and thus our will, the personal element is introduced into our wishing, into our willing.

Thus we are actually in a state of equilibrium between the Luciferic and the Ahrimanic element. The Luciferic-Ahrimanic element delivers us to illness and death in the physical; in the soul sphere it develops deception in so far as we consider something a reality which merely belongs to the world of thought, of fantasy. In regard to the spiritual sphere, the desire of egotism penetrates into our human nature on this path.

Thus we see this duality — Lucifer-Ahriman — connected with human nature, and I have shown you by Milton's *Paradise Lost*, by Klopstock's *Messiah*, and by Goethe's *Faust* how modern civilized mankind deceives itself, can deceive itself, in regard to this duality. Now we have to keep in mind that mankind in its development has passed beyond the middle point of Earth evolution. Mankind's evolution was, in the first place, an ascending one; then it reached its climax and is now on the descending path. For certain reasons which we need not discuss today there was a state of balance in the Greco-Latin period up to the fifteenth century. Since that time, however, earth humanity's evolution is on the descending path. Physical *Earth* evolution has entered the descending path at a much earlier period; already at the time which preceded our last ice age; that is, prior to the Atlantean catastrophe, *Earth* evolution began to descend in a physical respect. This is a fact which anthroposophists need not announce to the world; for it is already known to geology, as I have frequently mentioned, that as we walk over the earth in numerous regions we walk already over the earth crust in the state of decline. You need only read the descriptions of *Earth* evolution in good geology books of our day and you will find that physical science has come to the conclusion that the earth is on the descending stage of its evolution. But we human beings, too, are on the descending stage of evolution. We must not expect that any upward trend will arise in our bodily development. We must take hold of the upward trend by looking upon that which leads the human being beyond the *Earth* evolution to its subsequent evolutionary forms. We must learn to look upon the human being of the future. This means to think in the sense of Michael, to have Michaelic thoughts.

I will characterize more precisely what it means *to think in the sense of Michael, to think Michaelically*. You see, my dear friends, if you confront your fellow-man today, you actually confront him with a completely materialistic consciousness. You say to yourselves, even though you do not say it aloud nor even in thought, but you say to yourselves in the more intimate recesses of your consciousness: This is a man of flesh and blood; this is a man of earth substances. You say the same in the case of the animal, the same in the case of the plant. But what you thus say to yourselves when confronting man, animal and plant, you are justified in saying only in regard to the mineral nature. Let us deal at once with the most extreme case, with man. Let us consider man in regard to his external form. That which constitutes his external shape you do not really see, you do not confront it at all with your physical capacity of observation, for it is filled with more than ninety percent of fluid, of water. That which fills the form as mineral substance is what you see with your physical eyes. That which man unites with himself of this outer mineral world is what you see; the human being who does the uniting you do not see. You speak correctly only if you say to yourself: What confronts me here are the particles of matter which the human spirit shape stores up in itself; this makes the invisible being which stands here before me visible. You all as you are sitting here are invisible to physical senses. A certain number of shapes are sitting here; they have, through a certain inner power of attraction collected particles of matter. These particles of matter are what we see; we merely see the mineral. The real human beings that are sitting here are invisible, are supersensible. To say this to oneself with full consciousness at every moment of waking life constitutes the Michaelic mode of

thinking; to cease conceiving of the human being as a conglomerate of mineral particles which he but arranges in a certain way, as is also assumed of animals and plants and from which only the minerals are excepted, and to become conscious of the fact that we walk among invisible human beings — this means to think Michaelically.

We speak of Ahrimanic and Luciferic beings, we speak of the beings of the hierarchy of the Angeloi, Archangeloi, Archai, and so forth. These are invisible beings. We learn to know them by their effects. We have discussed many of these effects, even during the last few days. We learn to know these beings by their deeds. Well, is the matter different with the human being? We learn to know the human being — who is invisible — here in the physical world through the fact that he arranges mineral particles in a human-like shape. But this is only an activity of the human being, an effect of his nature. The fact that we have to become clear about the effects of Ahriman and Lucifer, of the Angeloi, Archangeloi, Archai, and so forth, in another way means simply that we have to learn to know them in a different manner. But in regard to the supersensible character of these beings there is no difference between them and human beings if we employ reason in our thinking about the being of man.

To comprehend that we are not different in our essential being from the supersensible beings means to think in the spirit of Michael. Mankind was able to get along without this insight as long as it still received something from the mineral world. But since the mineral world is in a declining evolution, the human being must gradually acquire a spiritual conception of himself and the world. Since the seventies of the nineteenth century he is able, in growing measure, to find the inner strength to develop the consciousness that man is not a well-ordered conglomeration of particles of matter but that he is a supersensible being, and that these particles of matter are only a gesture of the external mineral world, indicating: here is a human being. Only because of the Ahrimanic influences which I have characterized in a recent lecture [Lecture of November 15, 1919, Dornach] does the human being fend off this inner consciousness, does he try to avoid it. One thing is connected with another in human life. And just as we labor under the delusion that man is a sensuous and not a supersensible being, so do we labor under other delusions. We speak of evolution and imagine that one thing proceeds from the other in a continuous progressive development. You know that it was not possible to follow such a thought in depicting evolution artistically in our Building. [See Rudolf Steiner, *Der Baugedanke des Goetheanum*, with 104 photographs of the first Goetheanum.] When I developed the forms for the capitals, I had to show the first, second, and third capital in an ascending evolution, the fourth stood in the middle, the fifth began the declining evolution, the sixth was still simpler, the seventh the most simple. I had to add to the ascending evolution the declining evolution.

Our head is in this declining evolution, whereas the rest of our organism is still in the ascending evolution. If we believe that evolution signifies a continuous ascent we forsake true reality. We then hold the view of Haeckel who, under the influence of a certain delusion, maintained that there are, first, simple beings, as evolution progresses, more and more complicated beings, more and more perfect beings, and so on and on, ad infinitum. This is nonsense. Every evolution that progresses also turns back and retrogresses. Every ascent is followed by a descent; every ascent bears in itself the germ for the descent. It belongs among the most insidious deceptions of modern mankind that it is unaware of the connection between evolution and devolution, between progressive development and retrogressive development. For from every ascending evolution there must result the disposition for retrogressive evolution. At the moment when progressive evolution begins to become retrogressive, the physical passes over into the spiritual evolution. For as soon as the physical begins to become retrogressive, there is room for spiritual development. In our head there is room for spiritual development because physical development is on the retrogressive path. Only when we are in the position to see these things in the right light, that is, only when we see the connection of our intelligence with the Luciferic development shall we really

understand the being of man and thereby the world. For then we shall evaluate these things correctly and shall know that our intelligence needs a new impulse if it is to lead man to his goal. Through the Christ principle Lucifer must be prevented from making the human being desert his predestined divine course.

I said before: One thing is connected with the other. Human beings are today under the influence of the same delusion which attributed to the divine powers certain Luciferic qualities. The same delusion creates today the inclination in human beings to see an ideal in the one-sided representation, of the beautiful, for instance. To be sure, it is possible to represent the beautiful as such. But we must be conscious of the fact that were we as human beings merely to surrender ourselves to the beautiful, we would cultivate those forces in us which lead into Luciferic channels. Just as there is no one-sided progressive evaluation in the real world, but evolution is followed by devolution, so likewise there exists no one-sided beauty in the real world. The merely beautiful used by Lucifer in order to fascinate and blind human beings would set human beings free of *Earth* evolution; it would sever their connection with it. Just as there is an interplay of evolution and devolution, so we have in reality to do with an interplay of beauty and ugliness; in truth, there is a hard battle between beauty and ugliness. And if we wish really to take hold of art we must never forget that the ultimate in art in the world is the interplay of the beautiful and the ugly, the presentation of the battle of the beautiful with the ugly. For only by looking upon the state of equilibrium between the beautiful and the ugly do we stand within reality; then we do not exist within a one-sided Luciferic or Ahrimanic reality not belonging to us, into which, however, Lucifer and Ahriman strive to place us. It is very necessary that such ideas as I have just put forward enter human cultural evolution. You know that I have often spoken to you with great enthusiasm about Greek culture, yet in ancient Greece it was still possible to devote oneself one-sidedly to the cultivation of beauty, for mankind at that time had not yet been taken hold of by the decline of *Earth* evolution, at least not the Greeks. Since that time, however, man must not any longer indulge in the cultivation of the merely beautiful. This would be a flight from reality. He must, boldly and courageously, confront the real battle between beauty and ugliness. He must be able to feel, and experience the dissonances in their battle with the consonances of the world.

This will bring strength into mankind's evolution, and from this strength will spring the possibility of attaining that inner condition of consciousness which lifts us above the delusion that the human being consists in his true essence of heaped-up matter, of mineral particles of substance which he has drawn together into himself. Even from the physical aspect it can be said today that man does not bear in his being the signature of mineral nature, of external physical nature. The outer mineral is heavy. But that which gives us, for instance, the possibility of developing the soul element — I do not refer here to intelligence — that which makes us capable of developing soul qualities is not bound to gravity but to its opposite, to what is called the levity of fluids. I have on other occasions described to you how our brain swims in the cerebral fluid. If this were not so, the blood corpuscles contained in it would be crushed. You know from your lessons in physics that Archimedes, sitting in his bath, discovered that he became lighter, and he was so pleased about this that he called out his famous "Eureka!" In regard to our soul, we do not live by being pulled downward, but by being pulled upward. Not by our brain being heavy, but by our brain being lighter through its swimming in the cerebral fluid do we live physically. We live by means of what draws us away from the earth. This may be stated today even from the physical aspect.

However, what I wanted to point out to you in the present lectures was and is that, confronting modern life, we need a condition of soul which really, at every moment of day-waking life, is conscious of the supersensible in the immediate surroundings, and which does not surrender to the delusion that the human being is real because he can be seen, and the spirits are not real because they cannot be seen. For the truth is that we do not see the human beings either. This is precisely the delusion that we believe

we see the human beings. We do not differ at all from the beings of the higher hierarchies. To learn to grasp the similarity between the beings of the higher hierarchies and ourselves, and even the animals and plants, is the task put to modern mankind.

We say that through the Mystery of Golgotha the Christ impulse has entered *Earth* evolution, has entered mankind's evolution, to begin with, and is henceforth united with it. People say: We do not see it. Indeed, they will not see it as long as they deceive themselves about man himself, as long as they consider man to be something quite different from what he really is. The moment this is no longer a theory but a vividly felt reality of the soul which enables us to see in man a supersensible being, we cultivate within us the faculty of perceiving the Christ impulse in our midst, everywhere, and of being able to say with full conviction: do not seek for Him in external manifestation; He is among you everywhere. But mankind would have to develop the belief, modestly and humbly, that it takes a great effort to cultivate the consciousness which, right from the outset, sees in man a supersensible being. For if we do this only in theory it is of no avail. Only if we really do not believe that what confronts us physically is the real human being, only if we feel this to be an absurdity, have we acquired the state of soul I am referring to.

My dear friends, if you were to go to our building lot outside and collect all kinds of scrap that is lying about there and through clever handling of it were able to hold it in front of you in such a way that a person who met you could not see you but only the scraps of wood or brick — you would not maintain that these scraps of brick and wood are the human being. But the matter is in no way different in regard to the mineral substances with which you confront your fellow-men, arranged in a certain way. Yet you say: these mineral substances — since your physical eyes see them — are the human being! In truth they are only the gesture which points to the real human being.

If we look back into pre-Christian times we shall find that God's Messenger came down to earth, visibly, as it were, revealing and making himself understood to the human being. The greatest Messenger of God Who came down to the earth, the Christ, was at the same time the One Who was able to reveal Himself in the greatest earth event as the last one of those who could reveal themselves without the human beings' assistance. Now we live in the age of the Michael Revelation. It exists like the other revelations. But it does not force itself upon the human being because man has entered his evolution of freedom. We must go out to meet the revelation of Michael, we must prepare ourselves so that he sends into us the strongest forces and we become conscious of the supersensible in the immediate surroundings of the earth. Do not fail to recognize what this Michael revelation would signify for men of the present and the future if men were to approach it in freedom. Do not fail to recognize that men of today strive for a solution of the social question out of the remnants of ancient states of consciousness.

All the problems that could be solved out of the ancient states of human consciousness have been solved. The earth is on the descending stage of its evolution. The demands which arise today cannot be solved with the thinking of the past. They can only be solved by a mankind with a new soul constitution. It is our task so to direct our activity that it may assist the rise of this new soul constitution in mankind. The fact that human beings cannot free themselves from the concepts which have been fostered for millennia oppresses our souls like a terrible nightmare. We see today how the results of these age-old concepts which are divested of all content and are nothing more than mere word hulls run their course almost automatically. Everywhere there is talk about human ideals. But these ideals have not real content, they are merely sounding words, for mankind needs a new soul constitution. Once upon a time the call resounded to mankind which, translated into our language, says: "Change your thinking, for the time is at hand!" At that time, however, human beings were still able to change their thinking out of their old soul constitution. Now this possibility has ceased; if what at that time was begun will have to be fulfilled today, it must be fulfilled out of a new soul constitution.

Michael transmitted to human beings the Yahve-tradition, the Yahve-influence. Since the end of the seventies of last century he is engaged — if we but go to meet him — in transmitting the comprehension of the Christ-Impulse in the true sense of the word. But we must go to meet him. And we do come to meet him if we fulfill two conditions.

In regard to our own soul constitution we can say to ourselves: We have to overcome a certain error. I do not wish to burden you unduly with narrow abstractions and philosophical world conceptions, but I have to draw your attention to such a symptom of modern human evolution as the philosopher Cartesius (Descartes) who lived at the dawn of the modern age. He still knew something of the spiritual which plays through the dying nervous system of man. But he made at the same time the statement: "I think, therefore I am." That is the opposite of the truth. When we think we are *not*, for in thinking we have merely the image of reality. Thinking would be of no consequence for us if we would exist within reality with our thinking, if thinking were not merely an image. We must become conscious of the mirror-character of our world of mental images, of our world of thoughts. The moment we become conscious of this mirror character we shall appeal to a different source of reality within us. Of this, Michael wills to speak to us. That means, we must try to recognize our thought world in the mirror-character; then we shall work against the Luciferic evolution. For the latter is greatly interested in pouring substance into our thinking, in trying to delude us with the erroneous belief that thinking is permeated by substance. Thinking contains no substance, but merely image. We shall take substance out of other and deeper levels of our consciousness. That is the one condition. We only need to be conscious that our thoughts make us weak, then we shall appeal to the strength of Michael; for he is to be the spirit who points us to that which is stronger in us than thought, whereas we have learned through modern civilization chiefly to look upon thought, and by doing so have become weak human beings because we have considered thought itself to be something real. We may imagine that we are turning ever so far away from mere abstract intelligence, but this is an illusion; for as modern human beings we are in the bondage of intelligence and do not send out of the deeper levels of our being into thoughts themselves that which ought to be in them.

The second condition is that we introduce into our wishes, and thus into our will, that which results from a reality which we must recognize as supersensible. The fact that the Mystery of Golgotha in its supersensible character has not been taken absolutely seriously has had dire consequences. I have often mentioned it here. I have, for instance, drawn your attention to the views of the liberal theologian, Adolf Harnack. There are many such liberal theologians who openly confess: through historical documents there cannot be found any proof of the reality of the Mystery of Golgotha. Indeed, my dear friends, it is impossible to prove historically the existence of the Christ Jesus in the same way it is possible to prove the existence of Caesar or that of Napoleon. Why? Because in the Mystery of Golgotha an event was to be placed before mankind to which it should have only supersensible access. It was not to have access to it through the senses. In order that mankind might learn, precisely through the Mystery of Golgotha, to raise itself to the supersensible, there was not to be any external, sensible, historical proof.

We have thus indicated two things toward which we must strive. First, to recognize the supersensible in the immediate sense world, that is, in the world of man, animal, and plant: this is the *Michael path*. And its continuation is to find in the world which we ourselves recognize as supersensible, the *Christ impulse*.

In describing this to you, I am describing to you at the same time the deepest impulses of the social question. For the abstract League of Nations will not solve the international problem. Such abstractions do not bring the people together all over the earth. But the spirits who lead the human beings into the supersensible, and of whom we have spoken during these days, will bring people together.

Externally, mankind approaches today serious battles. In regard to these serious battles which are only at their beginning — I have often mentioned it here — and which will lead the old impulses of *Earth* evolution ad absurdum, there are no political, economical, or spiritual remedies to be taken from the pharmacy of past historical evolution. For from these past times come the elements of fermentation which first, have brought Europe to the brink of the abyss, which will array Asia and America against each other, and which are preparing a battle over the whole earth. This leading ad absurdum of human evolution can be counteracted alone by that which leads men on the path toward the spiritual: the Michael path which finds its continuation in the Christ Path.

## *The Mission of the Archangel Michael*

### IV

The Culture of the Mysteries and the Michael Impulse. Self-knowledge  
and its Permeation of the Three Strata of Consciousness

November 28, 1919

IN PURSUANCE of the considerations I placed before you in the lectures of last week I should like today to prepare the ground for what I shall develop in detail tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. It will be a matter of calling back to your memory, in a way different from the one heretofore employed, of much that we shall need in order to pursue our present theme.

If we try to make clear to ourselves the way in which *Earth* evolution unfolded we can do so best by considering and arranging the various events in relation to the central point of Earth evolution; for through such an arrangement we arrive at a certain structure in man's own evolution. This central point, this center of gravity is, as you know, the Mystery of Golgotha through which the whole *Earth* evolution received its meaning, its true inner content.

If we go back in the evolution of occidental humanity which received the impulse of the Mystery of Golgotha from the orient, we must say: approximately in the fifth century before the occurrence of the Mystery of Golgotha there begins, out of Greek culture, a kind of preparation for this Mystery of Golgotha. This uniform trend is introduced through the figure of Socrates, finds its continuation in Greek culture in its entirety — also in art the same trend is discernible — it is continued by the mighty and outstanding personality of Plato and receives a more scholarly character, as it were, in Aristotle.

You know from various lectures I delivered before you that the Middle Ages, mainly in the time after St. Augustine, were especially bent on using the guidance that could be gained from the Aristotelian mode of thinking in order to comprehend what prepared the Mystery of Golgotha and what followed it. Greek thinking became of such great importance precisely for the Christian evolution of the occident up to the end of the Middle Ages through the fact that it was used for the comprehension of the real nature of the Mystery of Golgotha. It is well that we should realize what it was that took place in Greece during these last centuries prior to the event of the Mystery of Golgotha.

What took place in the thinking, feeling and willing of the Greek was the last echo of a primeval culture of mankind no longer appreciated today. Historical considerations can no longer see these things in their proper light, for our historical considerations do



not reach back to those times in which a Mystery culture that extended over the civilized earth of that age permeated all human willing and feeling. We must go back into those millennia into which history does not reach, we must go back with the methods which you find indicated in my book, *Occult Science, an Outline*, {Anthroposophic Press, New York} in order to see what was the nature of this human primeval culture. In had its origin in the ancient Mysteries into which those human beings who were found to be objectively suited for direct initiation were admitted by great leading personalities. The knowledge which was thus imparted to those initiates in the Mysteries flowed, through them, out to other human beings. One cannot understand ancient culture in its entirety if one does not focus one's attention upon the maternal soil of the Mysteries. If one is willing to do so, this maternal soil of the Mysteries can be clearly discerned in the works of Aeschylus. It can be sensed in Plato's philosophy. But the revelations concerning the Divine which mankind received from the Mysteries have been lost historically. Only in the most primitive fashion are they still contained in that which has become historically demonstrable culture. We can best judge what has happened here if we make clear to ourselves what it is that has remained, in the post-Socratean age of Greek civilization, of the primeval Mystery culture in which Greek civilization was rooted. What has remained is a certain mode of thinking, a certain way of visualizing.

As you know, outer history relates how Socrates founded dialectics, how he was the great teacher of thinking, of that thinking which, later on, Aristotle developed in a more scientific way. But this Greek mode of thinking is only the last echo of the Mystery culture, for this culture of the Mysteries was rich in content. Spiritual facts which are the fundamental causes for our cosmic order were adopted into man's entire view of things. These sublime and mighty contents were gradually lost. But the way of thinking developed by the Mystery pupils has remained and has become historical, first, in Greek thinking, then, again, in Medieval thinking, in the thinking of the Christian theologians who acquired this Greek thinking in order to grasp with the thought forms, with the ideas and concepts which were a continuation of Greek thinking, that which has flowed into the world through the Mystery of Golgotha. Medieval philosophy, so-called scholasticism, is a confluence of the spiritual truths of the Mystery of Golgotha and Greek thinking. The elaboration, the thought-penetration of the Mystery of Golgotha has been carried out — if I may use the trivial expression — with the tool of Greek thinking, of Greek dialectics. Up to the Mystery of Golgotha, about four and one half centuries elapsed from the time when the content of the Mysteries was lost and the merely formal element, the mere thought element of the ancient Mysteries was retained. We may say, approximately, four and one half centuries. Thus we have to visualize the following: In a pre-historical age, the culture of the Mysteries extends over the civilized earth of that time. In the course of evolution only a distillate of it remains, namely, Greek dialectics, Greek thinking. Then the Mystery of Golgotha takes place. In the occident this is, at the outset, comprehended by means of this Greek dialectics. Anyone who wishes to familiarize himself with the science, let us say, even of the tenth, the eleventh, the twelfth, the thirteenth, the fourteenth century, which still comprises theology, must employ his thinking in a way that is quite different from the present-day natural-scientific mode of thought. Most human beings who today pass an opinion on scholasticism cannot do it justice because they only have a natural-scientific training, and scholasticism requires a training of thought that is different from modern natural-scientific training.

Now, my dear friends, today we live at a point of time in which again four and one half centuries have elapsed since this natural-scientific mode of thinking took hold of mankind. In the middle of the fourteenth century, human beings of the Occident begin to think in the way we find developed, already to the degree of brilliancy, in Galileo or in Giordano Bruno. This, then, is carried over into our age. Indeed, my dear friends, it is, seemingly, the same logic as that of the Greeks; yet, in reality, it is a completely different logic. It is a logic which is gradually derived from the nature processes in the

way the Greek logic was derived from that which the Mystery pupils beheld in the Mysteries.

Let us now try to make clear to ourselves the difference that exists between the four and one half centuries prior to the event of the Mystery of Golgotha in the civilized world of that time, which was almost limited to Greece, and the four and one half centuries in which humanity was trained for natural-scientific thinking. It is easiest for me to describe this to you graphically. Visualize the culture of the Mysteries like a kind of mountain summit of human spiritual culture in very ancient times. This culture of the Mysteries — I shall proceed step by step — then becomes logic in Greece, up to the Mystery of Golgotha. This, then, finds its continuation in the Middle Ages through scholasticism.

During four and one half centuries prior to the Mystery of Golgotha we have the last ramification, the echo of the ancient Mystery culture. With the fifteenth century A.D. a new way of thinking begins which we might call thinking in the style of Galileo. The period of time that elapsed between this starting point and our present day is of the same length as that which elapsed between the appearance of the Greek way of thinking and the Mystery of Golgotha. But while the latter period is a final echo, an evening glow, as it were, the former is a prelude, something that has to be evolved, that has to be brought to a certain height. Greek culture stood at an end. We stand at a beginning.

We shall only gain a complete understanding of this placing, side by side, of an end and a beginning if we observe the evolution of mankind from a certain spiritual-scientific point of view.

I have repeatedly stated that it is not without reason that in the present age the attempt toward self-knowledge of mankind is made, the tools for which are offered by the anthroposophically-oriented spiritual science. For the large majority of mankind confronts a significant future possibility. In this connection it is important that we take seriously the fact that the evolving historical humanity is an organism that develops continuously. Just as in the case of the single organism we have puberty, and also later epochal transitions, so likewise, in human history, we have epochal transitions. Today, human beings still meet the doctrine of repeated earth lives with the objection that human beings do not remember their previous earth lives.

Anyone who, in a factual manner, conceives of the evolutionary history of mankind as of an organism, as I have just indicated, should not be surprised that human beings do not today, in their ordinary knowledge, remember their former earth lives. For I ask you: what does man remember in ordinary life? That which he first has *thought*. What he has not thought he cannot remember. Just think how many events of a day remain unobserved by you. You do not remember them because you did not think them in spite of their having taken place in your surroundings. You can only remember what you have thought.

Now, in the former centuries and millennia of mankind's evolution, human beings did not attain to any factual clarity about their own nature. To be sure, since the appearance of Greek thinking the "know thyself" exists like a longing, but this "know thyself" will only be fulfilled through real spiritual cognition. Only through the fact that human beings once employ one life in order to comprehend in thought their own self — and humanity has only become ripe for this in our age — is memory prepared for the next earth life. For we must first have thought about that which we are to remember later. Only those who, in earlier ages, through initiation (which need not have been acquired in the Mysteries) could look factually upon their own self are able in the present age to look back upon former earth lives. And there are not so few human beings who are able to do this. Nevertheless, the situation is such that man, also with respect to his purely bodily evolution, undergoes a transformation. These things cannot be observed externally in physiology, but they can be observed spiritual-scientifically. Mankind today does not have the same bodily constitution it had two thousand years ago, and in two thousand

years from today it will again have a different constitution. I have talked to you about this subject repeatedly. Human beings live toward a time in the future in which their brains will be constructed in a way that is quite different from the way their brains are constructed today in an external sense. The brain will have the possibility of remembering former earth lives. But those who have not prepared themselves today through reflection upon their own self will sense this faculty — which will be theirs mechanically — merely as an inner nervousness, if I may use the current expression, as an inner deficiency. They will not find what they are lacking, because mankind in the meantime will have become ripe, in regard to its corporeality, to look back upon its previous earth lives, but if it has not prepared this retrospect, it cannot look back; it then will sense this faculty only as a deficiency. Therefore, proper knowledge of the present-day powers of transformation of mankind indicates by its very nature that human beings are brought to self-knowledge through the anthroposophically-oriented spiritual science. Now, it is possible, and today I shall only indicate this, it is possible to point out the nature of this special experience which will suggest to human beings to take into account previous earth lives.

Today we live in an age in which those shades of feeling which will become more and more prevalent are indicated only in a few human beings; but still, they are indicated in these few human beings. Not much attention is paid to them yet. I shall describe them to you in the way in which they will appear eventually. Human beings will be born into the world and they will say to themselves: by living with other human beings, I am educated, consciously or unconsciously, for a certain way of thinking. Thoughts arise in me. I am born into and educated for a certain way of thinking, of visualizing. But at the same time I look at my outer surroundings: my thinking, my visualizing does not properly fit this outer surrounding world. — this shade of feeling is already present today in individual human beings. They must think in a direction which makes it appear to them as if outer nature said something entirely different, as if outer nature demanded something completely different from them. Whenever such human beings appeared that have felt this discrepancy between what they must think and what external nature says, they have been ridiculed. Hegel, for instance, is a classical example for this. He has expressed certain thoughts about nature — and not all of Hegel's thoughts are foolish! — and has arranged them systematically. Then the philistines came and said: Well, these are your ideas concerning nature; but just look at this or that process in nature: it does not agree with your ideas. Then Hegel answered: Too bad for nature!

Naturally, this seems paradoxical; nevertheless, subjectively this feeling is well founded. It is absolutely possible that one surrenders, without prejudice, to one's innate thinking and says: if nature were really to correspond to this thinking, she would have to take on a different form. To be sure, after some time one will also become accustomed to that which nature teaches. Most people who find themselves in such a position do not notice that by having acquired nature observation they really bear two souls within themselves, two truths, as it were. Those who do notice it may suffer greatly from this discrepancy brought into their soul life. What I am describing to you here and which is present in some human beings today although they are not aware of it will become ever more present. Human beings will say to themselves more and more: through what I am by birth, my head really forces me to form a picture about nature. But this does not coincide with nature herself. Then, as I become more familiar with life, I also acquire in the course of time what nature herself teaches. I must find a way out of this.

These discordant sensations will arise in our souls when they return again to earth. A source of inner thoughts and sensations will arise in us which will cause us to day: you sense clearly how the world ought to be; it is, however, different. Then, again, we shall familiarize ourselves with this world; we shall learn to know a second kind of law, and we shall have to seek a balance between the two.

Let us assume the human being enters physical existence through birth. He brings

with him in his thinking and feeling the result of his previous earth life. While he was not united with the life of the earth, this external earth life has actually undergone a change. He senses a discrepancy between his thinking, the effects of which he brings from his previous life, and the things as they have developed in the period during which he was absent from the earth. His thinking does not harmonize with them. And now gradually he adjusts himself to his new life, but he does by no means completely take up into this consciousness what he may learn from his surroundings. He only takes it up as though through a veil. He elaborates it only after death, and then, again, carries it into his next life. Man will constantly live in this duality of his soul life. He will always become aware of the following: You are bringing with you something in regard to which the world into which you have grown through birth is new. But through your physical being you now receive something from this world which does not completely penetrate your soul, which you will have to work over, however, after death.

The human being of the present day ought to become thoroughly acquainted with the way of experiencing life. For only by familiarizing himself with such a thing does he become aware of the forces which pulse through our existence and which otherwise remain entirely unnoticed. We are drawn into the web of these forces. But if we do not try to penetrate them with our consciousness, they make us to a certain degree sick in our soul. This falling apart the human being will perceive more and more: the falling apart of that which has stayed with him from the previous life and that which is prepared in the present life for the next one. And since man will sense this duality more and more, he will be in need of an inner mediation, a real inner mediation. And the great question will become ever more burning: Where must we look for this inner mediation? We can only find an answer to this question if we consider the following:

I have often told you that we human beings are completely awake only in our thinking in the period between awaking and falling asleep of ordinary life. The life of thought means complete wakefulness. We are not completely awake, even in waking life, in regard to our feelings. Our feelings are at the stage of dream consciousness, even though we are fully awake in our conceptions and thoughts. He who is able to make research in this field knows through direct perception that feelings have no greater vitality than have dreams; only, the conception through which feelings are represented makes it appear differently. But the life of feelings as such arises out of the depths of consciousness like the surging up of dreams. And the actual life of will is asleep in us, even in our waking life; in regard to the will we are asleep. Thus, also in waking life, we carry these three states of consciousness within us. During the day, we walk around with a waking life of thoughts; we deceive ourselves in believing that we are awake also in our will because we have thoughts about that which the will performs. Not the experience of the will itself, but only its mental image is what enters our consciousness. We dream our feelings, we sleep our willing. But if imaginative knowledge raises up what otherwise dreams in the feelings and makes it a matter of complete, clear world cognition, then we become aware of the fact that wisdom is contained not only in our thoughts — let us call it “wisdom” although with many human beings it is “un-wisdom” — but that wisdom is also contained in our feelings, and that it is also contained in our willing. In regard to present-day human existence we can only speak clearly about that which is contained in our thought life. In regard to the world of feelings mankind today entertains thoughts which hardly differ from those it entertains in regard to dream life; and yet, wisdom is also contained in the life of feeling.

My dear friends, the person who earnestly applies to his own soul the exercises which are described in my book, *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and Its Attainment* {Anthroposophic Press, New York} will come closest to experiencing a certain inner soul-surging which takes its course in a dreamlike manner, as it were. For most human beings it will not contain more regularity than ordinary dreaming; but it is possible, at a comparatively early moment, to bring so much order into this inner experiencing that one becomes aware of the fact that, although this inner experience is not governed by

ordinary logic — indeed, it is sometimes governed by a very grotesque logic, and the most varied fragments of thought arrange themselves and occur in a dreamlike fashion — one becomes aware of the fact that something real takes place there. This first inner experience, which is still very primitive, may be recognized by the one who applies, even to some degree, to his own soul life what has been described in my book, *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and Its Attainment*. When the human being dives down into this surging of waking dreams, a new reality emerges in contrast to the ordinary reality of external life. Comparatively soon the human being may become aware of this arising of a new reality. And also comparatively soon may he become aware that wisdom is contained in all this, but a wisdom he cannot take hold of, for which he does not feel himself mature enough to become fully conscious of it. It escapes him time and again, and he does not understand it. But he becomes aware, or at least, may become aware of the fact that wisdom does not only flow through the upper stratum of his consciousness which permeates him in ordinary waking day-life, but that below this there lies another stratum of his consciousness which appear illogical to him for the simple reason that he himself calls it that since he cannot yet take hold of its wisdom. We may say: the moment we have completely acquired *imaginative cognition*, these waking dreams cease to be as grotesque as they appear to ordinary life; they then permeate themselves with a wisdom that points to another content of reality, to a world different from the sense world which we fathom with ordinary wisdom.

You see, my dear friends, in ordinary life only the world of feeling surges up into our every-day consciousness out of this substratum of our consciousness. And out of a still deeper stratum, which lies below the one just mentioned, there surges up the world of will which is also permeated by wisdom. We are connected with this wisdom, but we are not at all aware of it in ordinary consciousness. Thus we may say: We human beings are governed by three strata of consciousness. The first is our *conceptual consciousness* in which we live every day. The second is an *imaginative consciousness*. And the third is an *inspired consciousness* which remains very deeply hidden, which works in us, to be sure, but whose nature we do not recognize in ordinary life. If only modern philosophy were less perplexed in its concepts — I am not referring here to people who have nothing to do with philosophy, but philosophers should grasp such matters, yet they refuse to do so — if only modern philosophy were less confused it would have to notice the great difference that exists between truths that are arrived at purely upon the basis of external observation of nature and the truths that are found in the sciences, such as mathematics and geometry, which are employed in the endeavor to understand external nature.

We are in a sense justified in saying that in regard to the truths which man acquires through external observation — this has so often been stressed in the history of philosophy that a special reference to it ought to be superfluous for the philosopher — in regard to the truths of external observation we can never speak of actual certainty. Kant and Hume have elaborated this especially clearly by their grotesque assertion that, although it is true that we observe that the sun rises, we cannot, however, assert from this observation that the sun will rise again tomorrow; we only can conclude from the fact that the sun has risen up to now every day that it will also rise tomorrow. This is the way with all truths which we derive from external observation. But it is not so in the case of mathematical truths. If we have once grasped them we know they are valid for all future times. Whoever knows and is able to prove, out of inner reasons, that the square above the hypotenuse equals the sum of the square of the two other sides of the right-angled triangle knows that it would be impossible to draw a rectangular triangle for which this law does not hold good.

These mathematical truths are different from the truths we arrive at through external observations; we know the facts, but with the means of present-day research we are unable to grasp the underlying reason. The reason is to be found in the fact that mathematical truths originate deep down in the inner being of man, that they arise on

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the third level of consciousness, in the lowest stratum and, without his being aware of it, shoot up into man's upper consciousness, where he then perceives them inwardly. We possess mathematical truths through the fact that we ourselves behave mathematically in the world. We walk, we stand, and so forth; we describe certain lines on the earth. Through this will relationship to the external world we actually receive the inner perception of mathematics. Mathematics arises below in the third consciousness and shoots up from there.

Conceptual life	Complete Wakefulness	Wisdom
Feeling	Dreaming	Wisdom
Will	Sleeping	Wisdom

### I. Conceptual Life

### II. Imaginations

### III. Inspirations

Thus, although we are not conscious of its origin, we have very clear concepts of at least one part of this lowest stratum of consciousness: we are aware of the mathematical and geometrical concepts. The middle stratum is of a dreamlike and confused character. And here, "in the upper story," where the day-waking conceptual life takes place, we are clear again. What plays up from the third stratum of consciousness is also clear in us. What lies between the two reaches most human beings like a confused waking dreaming. It is very significant that we should make this fact clear to ourselves. For, you see, the Greeks, during the four and one half centuries (number one), which they had retained as the remainder of the Mystery culture. And this is a purely Luciferic element. I have described it to you recently: it is the intellectualistic culture. Clarity rules in our head. It is permeated by wisdom, generally valid wisdom. But this is the Luciferic element in us.

And, again, that which exists here below and which is so much beloved by modern scientists and was so much beloved by Kant that he said: in regard to nature, science exists only in as far as it contains mathematics — this is the purely Ahrimanic element, which arises from below through our human nature. It is the Ahrimanic element.

It does not suffice, my dear friends, to know of something that it is correct. We know that the things we comprehend intellectually through our head are correct; but this is a gift of the Luciferic element. And we know that mathematics is correct; but this sovereign correctness of mathematics we owe to Ahriman who sits in us. The most uncertain element is in the middle. It consists of seemingly illogical, billowing dreams.

I will describe to you another symptom so that you may grasp the full significance of this matter. In reality, the whole mathematical conception of the world as it arose with Galileo and Giordano Bruno stems from this deepest stratum of consciousness. Four and one half centuries have elapsed since we have begun to acquire this world conception, since we have begun to introduce this Ahrimanic element into our human thinking and sensing. Whereas in Greek thinking the last echo of the Mystery culture shone into the clearest brightness of consciousness, there arises in our deepest, darkest strata of consciousness that which only in the future will reach its climax. This is beginning to arise down there.

### I. Conceptual Life (Lucifer)

### II. Imaginations (consciousness)

### III. Inspirations (Ahriman)

Our soul life is like a scale beam which has to try to establish equilibrium, on one

hand the Luciferic, on the other the Ahrimanic element. The Luciferic element lies in our clear head, the Ahrimanic element below in the wisdom which permeates our will. Between the two, we have to try to establish a state of balance in an element which at first does not seem to be permeated by anything.

How does wisdom enter this middle part of man? Man is placed in the world at present in such a way that his head is supported by Lucifer, his metabolic wisdom, his limb-wisdom by Ahriman. That which we have described as the middle state of consciousness is dependent upon our heart organization and the human rhythmical system (read what I saw concerning this fact in my book, *Von Seelenraetseln*). [Not yet translated into English. (Tr.)] This sphere of our existence must gradually become just as ordered as the head wisdom became ordered through logic and the Ahrimanic wisdom through mathematics, geometry, through external rational nature observation. What will bring inner logic, inner wisdom, inner power of orientation into this middle part of our human nature? The *Christ impulse*, that which passed over into the earth culture through the Mystery of Golgotha.

Thus you see, we have a spiritual-scientific anatomy which shows us what is culture of the head, what is culture of metabolism, which also shows us the nature and needs of that sphere of our organism which lies between the two. That man permeate himself with the Christ impulse is a requisite part of his nature.

Let us for a moment hypothetically assume that the Mystery of Golgotha had not entered *Earth* evolution: the human being would have his head wisdom. He also would have what has arisen since the fifteenth century A.D. But in regard to his central being he would be desolate and void. He would feel more and more the disagreement between the two inner spheres mentioned above. He would be unable to bring about the state of equilibrium. We can only bring about this state of equilibrium by permeating ourselves more and more with the Christ impulse which calls forth the state of balance between the Luciferic and Ahrimanic element.

From this you will see that we may say: In the pre-Christian four and one half centuries there was bestowed upon the human being, like a preparation for the Mystery of Golgotha, the last ramification of the ancient Mystery culture, which has settled like a head-memory of this ancient culture. And in our modern age, the human being passed through four and one half centuries of preparation for a new spirit direction, for a new kind of Mystery culture. But in order that these two might be connected in the historical evolution of mankind, the Mystery of Golgotha had to take place as an objective fact in mankind's evolution. Internally, however, this evolution takes its course in such a way that human beings grow and develop until, beginning with the fifteenth century A.D. they receive the new impulse which I have characterized as an Ahrimanic impulse, and through which they will feel more and more: we need the possibility of building a bridge between the two periods.

In this way we may inwardly comprehend the threefold human being. And we shall comprehend him still more accurately if we join to what I have said today something which I have repeatedly mentioned. It was impossible for the ancient Greeks who retained the remnants of ancient Mystery culture to be an atheist — although it happened in a few abnormal cases, but not to the degree it occurs today. Atheism has only arisen in more recent times, at least in its radical form. For the Greek who was really imbued with dialectics felt the Divine holding sway in thinking, even in thinking void of content.

If we know this and then look upon the appearance of atheism, upon the complete denial of the Divine, we shall find the reason for this atheism. Only those human beings, my dear friends — naturally, we need the methods of spiritual science in order to recognize this — only those human beings are atheists in whose organism something is organically disturbed. To be sure, this may lie in very delicate structural conditions, but it is a fact that atheism is in reality a disease.

This is the first thing we have to hold fast: atheism is a disease. For, if our organism is completely healthy, the harmonious functioning of its various members will bring it about that we ourselves sense our origin from the Divine — *ex deo nascimur*.

The second point, to be sure, is something different. Man may sense the Divine but may have no possibility to sense the Christ. In this respect we do not differentiate carefully enough today. We are satisfied with words, also in other spheres. For, if we test today the actual spiritual content of the view of many human beings of the occident and are not influenced by their words — they say they agree with Christian precepts, they believe in the freedom of the will, and so forth — we shall find that the whole configuration of their thinking contradicts what they thus express. Only through their participation in cultural life have they become accustomed to speak of Christ, of freedom, and so forth. In reality, my dear friends, a great number of human beings living among us are nothing but Turks; for the content of their faith is the same as the fatalistic content of faith of the Mohammedans — although this fatalism is often described as a necessity of nature. Mohammedanism is much more prevalent than we think. If we do not focus our attention upon the words but upon the spirit-soul content, we shall find that many Christians are Turks. They call themselves “Christians” even though they cannot find the transition from the God they sense to the Christ.

I only need to draw your attention to the classical example of a modern theologian, Adolf Harnack, who wrote the book, *Wesen des Christentums*. {Essence of Christianity.} Please, make the following test: scratch out in this book the name of Christ wherever it occurs and replace it by the name of God, this will change nothing in the content of this book. There is no necessity that what this man states should refer to the Christ. What he states refers to the general Father god who lies at the foundation of the world. There is no need at all that he should refer to the Christ with what he states. Wherever he proves something it is externally and internally untrue as he borrows the various communications from the Gospels. In the way he elaborates these communications there can be seen no reason whatsoever for connecting them with the Christ. We must acquire the possibility of conceiving of the Christ in such a way that we do not identify Him with the Father god. Many of the modern evangelical theologians are no longer able to differentiate between the general concept of God and the concept of the Christ. To be unable to find the Christ in life is a different matter from being unable to find the Father God — You know that it is not here a matter of doubting the Divinity of the Christ. It is a matter of clear differentiation, in the sphere of the Divine, between the Father God and the Christ God. This comes to expression in the soul of man. Not to find God the Father is a disease; not to find the Christ is a misfortune. For the human being is so connected with the Christ as to be inwardly dependent upon this connection. He is, however, also dependent upon that which has taken place as a historical event. He must find a connection with the Christ here upon earth, in external life. If he does not find it is a misfortune. Not to find the Father god, to be an atheist, is an illness. Not to find the Son God, the Christ, is a misfortune.

And what does it mean if we do not find the Spirit? To be unable to take hold of one's own spirituality in order to find the connection of one's own spirituality with the spirituality of the world signifies mental debility; not to acknowledge the Spirit is a deficiency of mind, a psychic imbecility.

Please remember these three deficiencies of the human soul constitution. Then we shall be able to continue tomorrow in the right way. Remember what I have told you today about the three kinds of consciousness; remember that it is a disease if we are an atheist, if we do not find the God out of whom we are born and whom we must find if we possess a completely sound organism; that it is a misfortune if we do not find the Christ; that it is a psychic deficiency if we do not find the Spirit.

This is also the way in which the paths that lead man to the Trinity differ from one another. It will become more and more necessary for mankind to enter into these



concrete facts of soul life and not to remain stuck in general, nebulous notions. People are specially inclined today toward these nebulous notions. To replace this inclination by the inclination to enter into concrete facts of soul life is an essential task of our age.

## *The Mission of the Archangel Michael*

### V

#### The Michael Deed and the Michael Influence as Counter-pole of the Ahrimanic Influence

November 29, 1919

ONLY THROUGH a knowledge of the most important and essential laws of human evolution can man attain a real consciousness that supports his soul. He must learn to know the events of human evolution and make them part of his question of taking fully into account — I made this remark already a few days ago — that the evolution of mankind is itself an evolution of a living entity. Just as there is ordered growth in the single human individual, so is there ordered growth in the evolution of the whole human race. And since the present is the moment when we have to become conscious of certain things, and since the human being has participated, during his repeated earth lives, in the various configurations of humanity's evolutionary history, it is also necessary to develop an understanding for the different human soul moods in the various epochs of mankind's evolution. I have often stated that what we call history today is really a *fable convenue*, a fable agreed upon, for the reason that the abstract recounting of events and the searching for cause and effect in historical processes in an external sense does not take into account the transformations, the metamorphoses of human soul life itself. When, from this point of view, we make tests, we can easily show that it is a prejudice to believe that the soul mood of modern man prevailed also in the times to which the first historical documents reach back. This is not the case. Human beings, even the simplest, most primitive, of the ninth and tenth post-Christian centuries had a soul mood completely different from that of human beings after the middle of the fifteenth century. We can trace this right into the lower strata of the human race, but also into the upper levels. Try, for instance, to familiarize yourselves with Dante's curious work about "Monarchy." If you read such a thing, not as an oddity, but with a certain cultural-historical sagacity, then you will notice that such a book of a representative of his time contains things which could not possibly have been spoken out of the soul of a modern human being.

In this book, which was intended as a serious treatise about the legal and political foundations of monarchy, Dante tries to show that the Romans were the most excellent people of the world, as far as it was known at that time, was the primeval right of the Romans. He tries to show that the conquest of the whole earth by the Romans constituted a right greater than for instance the right of independence of single, smaller peoples; for it was the will of God that the Romans should rule over the various smaller peoples, for the latter's own good. Dante offers many proofs, out of the spirit of his time, why the Romans were justified in ruling the earth. One of these proofs is the following: He says: The Romans descend from Aeneas. Aeneas married three times. First, Creusa; through this marriage he acquired the right, as progenitor of the race, to rule Asia. Secondly, he married Dido; through this marriage he acquired the right, as ancestor of the Romans, to rule Africa. Then he married Lavinia; through this he acquired the right for the Romans to rule Europe. Herman Grimm, who once discussed this matter, made the telling remark: How fortunate that at the time America and

Australia were not yet discovered!

But this sort of conclusion was something quite self-evident for an enlightened spirit of the time of Dante, indeed, for the most outstanding spirit of that time. This was a juridical presentation at that time. Now I ask you to imagine that any lawyer of the present age would draw such conclusions. You cannot imagine it. And you can just as little imagine that the mode of thought which Dante employs in regard to other subjects could arise in the soul constitution of a man of the present age.

Thus a quite obvious fact shows that we have to take into consideration the transformation of the soul constitutions of human beings. To fail to understand these things was tolerable in a certain way up to our time. But it will no longer do in our time, and quite especially will it not do for mankind in the future, for the simple reason that mankind, right up to our time, or at least up to the end of the eighteenth century, had certain instincts; (since the French Revolution matters have gradually changed, but still, old remnants remained of the soul constitutions in question.) Out of these instincts mankind was able to develop a consciousness which supported the soul. But in the present state of the constantly changing organism of mankind these instincts no longer exist and man must consciously acquire the connection with the whole of humanity. This is, after all, the deeper significance of the social question in our present time. What people state in their party platforms are only superficial formulations. That which surges in the depths of human souls expresses itself in such formulas; mankind feels that it is necessary to acquire a conscious relationship of the individual to the whole of humanity, that is, to acquire a social impulse.

Now, we cannot do so without focusing our attention upon the law of evolution. Let us do this once more after having done so repeatedly in regard to other questions. Let us take the time from the fourth post-Christian century up to the sixteenth post-Christian century. We see how Christianity bears the character of which I spoke yesterday and on previous occasions. We find that great care is taken during this period to understand the secrets of Golgotha through human concepts and ideas as they had been transmitted by Greek culture. Then a changed form of evolution sets in. We know that it really set in at an earlier time, around the middle of the fifteenth century; but it became clearly discernible only in the sixteenth century. At that time the natural-scientifically orientated thinking began to take hold of the upper level of mankind and to spread further and further.

Let us focus our attention upon this natural-scientific thinking in regard to a certain quality. There are many qualities of natural-scientifically orientated thinking which might be mentioned, but today we want to emphasize one quality in particular. It is the following: If we are a really efficient, modern thinker in the present sense, we are unable to cope with the problem of the *necessity of nature* and *human freedom*. The natural-scientific thinking of the modern age pressed onward more and more toward conceiving of the human being as a member of the rest of nature, the latter being considered a stream of causes and effects determining one another. Certainly, there exist today many human beings who see clearly that freedom, the experience of freedom, is a fact of human consciousness. But this does not prevent them from being unable to cope with this problem as they steep themselves in the special configuration of natural-scientific thinking. If we think about the being of man in the way modern natural science demands we are unable to reconcile this thinking with the thinking about human freedom. Some people take it very easy in regard to human freedom, in regard to the sense of human responsibility. I knew a professor of criminal law who began his lectures on criminal law every time with the following remarks: Gentlemen, I have to lecture to you on criminal law. Let us begin by assuming the axiom that there is human freedom and responsibility. For, if there were no human freedom and responsibility, there could be no criminal law. However, criminal law exists, for I have to lecture on it to you; therefore, responsibility and freedom exist also. — this argumentation is somewhat simple, but it points to the difficulty that arises for human beings when they have to ask

the question: How can the necessity of nature be reconciled with freedom? It shows, in other words, how the human being has been forced more and more through the evolution of the last few centuries to acknowledge a certain omnipotence of the necessity of nature. One does not express it in these words; nevertheless, a certain omnipotence of natural necessity is conceived of. What is this omnipotence of natural necessity?

We shall understand one another best if I remind you of something which I have mentioned frequently. Modern thinkers believe that they act — or, rather, think — without prejudice, merely as scientific researchers, when they assert that man consists of body and soul. People, all the way up to the great philosopher Wilhelm Wundt — who is great, however, merely through the graces of his publisher — people maintain: if we think without prejudice, we have to consider man as consisting of body and soul, if we ascribe any validity to the soul at all. And only timidly does the truth make its appearance, namely, that man consists of body, soul, and spirit. The philosophers who consider themselves unbiased in their belief that man consists of body and soul do not know that their concept is merely the result of a historical process which had its starting point in the eighth Œcumenical council of Constantinople when the Roman-Catholic church abolished the spirit by establishing the dogma that henceforth the orthodox Christian was to think of man as consisting of body and soul, the soul having some spiritual qualities. This was a church law; philosophers still teach it today and do not know that they are merely following a church law. They believe they carry on unprejudiced science. This is the situation today in regard to many things called “unprejudiced science.”

The matter is similar in regard to the necessity of nature. During the whole evolution between the fourth and the sixteenth centuries the concept of god took on a quite particular form. If one takes into account the more intimate aspects of the spiritual evolution of these centuries, one will become aware of the fact that a quite definite concept of God was more and more elaborated in human thinking, a concept of God which culminated in the dictum: *God, the Omnipotent, the All-Mighty*. Few people know that it would have had no meaning for human beings prior to the fourth post-Christian century to speak of God, the All-Mighty. My dear friends, we do not engage in catechism truths; there you will, naturally, find: God is all-mighty, all-wise, all-benevolent. All these are things which have nothing to do with realities. *Prior* to the fourth century, nobody would have thought of considering omnipotence as a fundamental quality of the Divine Being if he had an understanding of these matters and really lived with them. For at that time the after-effect of the Greek concepts still held sway. In thinking about the Divine Being, people would not have spoken of God, the All-Mighty, but of God, the Omniscient, the All-Wise.

## **God, the All-Mighty**

(Previously: God the All-Wise)  
fourth century sixteenth century

*Wisdom* was considered the fundamental attribute of the Divine Being. The concept of Omnipotence only gradually penetrated the idea of the Divine Being, from the fourth century onward. It continued to develop. The concept of personality was abandoned and the predicate was transmitted to the mere order of nature, which is conceived of more and more mechanically. And the modern concept of the necessity of nature, the omnipotence of nature, is nothing but the result of the evolution of the concept of God from the fourth to the sixteenth century. Only, the qualities of personality were abandoned and that which constituted the concept of God was taken over into the structure of thinking about nature.

Now, my dear friends, the genuine natural scientists of today would oppose such statements vigorously. Just as many philosophers believe they are thinking without

prejudice about man by considering him as consisting of body and soul, whereas in truth they merely follow the eighth Œcumenical Council of Constantinople in 869, — just as these philosophers are dependent upon a historical stream, so all the Haeckeleans, Darwinists, physicists with their natural order are dependent upon the theological stream that developed in the period from St. Augustine to Calvin. These things have to be comprehended. It is the peculiar character of every evolutionary stream that it comprises evolution as well as involution or devolution. And while the concept “God the All-Mighty” developed, there existed a *sub-current* in the subconscious spheres of human soul life, which then became the leading upper current: the nature necessity. (See diagram, red) And since the sixteenth century there exists a new sub-current which prepares precisely in our time to become an upper current. (blue.)



It is characteristic of the Michael age that that which has been prepared in the form of a sub-current of nature-necessity must henceforth become an upper current. But if we wish to acquire a possible concept of what it is that has thus prepared itself, we must understand the inner spirit of *Earth* evolution.

I recently drew your attention to the fact that what takes place in the evolution of the earth and of mankind in particular moves in a descending line. Earth humanity and the evolution of the earth itself is on the path of decadence. I drew your attention to the fact that this is today a recognized geological truth, that geologists who are to be taken seriously admit that the earth crust is in a process of decay. Mankind itself, in particular, is in a process of decay through the sensuous-earthly forces. And mankind, in its evolutionary process, must receive spiritual impulses which counteract decadence. Therefore a conscious spiritual life must enter mankind. We must be clear about the fact that we have already passed beyond the pinnacle of Earth evolution. In order that it may proceed, the spiritual must be taken up more and more clearly and distinctly.

At the outset, this seems an abstract fact. But for the spiritual researcher this is not an abstract fact. You know that we can trace the evolution of the *Earth* through the *Saturn*, *Sun*, and *Moon* states right into the *Earth* state. This evolution may also be characterized in the following way: if we speak of present mankind, we may consider the evolution of mankind through the *Saturn*, *Sun* and *Moon* periods as a preparation, as a pre-state. Only upon the Earth itself did man, as he received his ego, gain his true humanhood, and he will receive further elements into his true being during the subsequent evolutionary stages of the *Earth*.

Now you know that the so-called Archai, the present Spirits of Personality or Time Spirits, were in the Saturn state at the stage of evolution at which the human being is today, although in quite different forms, with a completely different outer aspect. I have expressed this in my books by saying: what we designate today as Archai, as Spirits of Personality, was man during the *Saturn* period. The Archangeloi were man during the *Sun* period, the Angeloi during the *Moon* period. During the Earth period we are man.

Our own evolution, of course, went on alongside all this, by way of preparation. If we go back to the *Moon* state we must say: Here the Angeloi were human beings, human beings, to be sure, with an appearance quite different from ours, for there were quite different conditions upon the ancient *Moon*. But alongside these *Moon* men, the Angeloi, we developed in a pre-state of the *Earth* evolution, in a very advanced state, so

that we had to be taken into consideration by the Angeloi. Especially during the descending phase of the *Moon* evolution did we, at times, constitute a troublesome concern for the Angeloi. The same, however, is the case with us in descending Earth evolution: since the Earth evolution has entered its descending phases, other beings make themselves felt. My dear friends, it is a significant, an important result of spiritual-scientific research which is to be taken very, very seriously, that we have already entered the period of *Earth* evolution when certain beings make themselves felt who upon *Jupiter* — the next state of *Earth* evolution — will have advanced to the form of man, a different form of man, to be sure, but which, nevertheless, may be compared with the being of man. For we will be different beings on *Jupiter*. These so-to-speak *Jupiter* men exist already now just as we existed upon the *Moon*. They exist, of course not externally visible; but I explained to you recently what it means to be externally visible, and that man is also a supersensible being. Supersensibly these beings are very decidedly present.

I emphasize once more: it is an extremely serious truth that certain beings make themselves felt which exist in the environment of mankind. They make themselves felt more and more since the middle of the fifteenth century. These beings possess chiefly the impulse of a force which is very similar to the human force of will, that force of will of which I told you yesterday that it exists in the deeper strata of the human consciousness. These invisible beings are related to that element of which ordinary consciousness thus remains unconscious today; but they already make themselves very strongly felt in the development of present-day humanity.

For the person who takes spiritual research truly seriously this is a problem of great magnitude. I was confronted with this problem especially strongly — at the time I spoke to a number of our friends about it in one or another form — I was confronted with this problem in a demanding fashion, as it were, when, in the year 1914, this war catastrophe broke in upon us. One had to ask oneself: How did an event overtake European mankind which it is impossible to gauge as to its causes in the way that is customary in regard to previous historical events? The one who knows that not more than thirty or forty people participated in Europe in the decisive events of the year 1914, and who also knows the soul condition in which most of these people were, will be confronted by this significant problem. For most of these people, as strange as it may sound today, my dear friends, most of these people had a dulled, obscured state of consciousness. During the last few years much has occurred that was caused by a dulled human consciousness. In the decisive places of the year 1914 we see everywhere that the most important decisions of the end of July and the beginning of August were reached with an obscured consciousness; and this has continued on right into our present day. This is a problem, terrifying in its nature. If we investigate it spiritual-scientifically, then we find that these obscured consciousnesses were the gateways through which precisely these will-beings were able to take possession of the consciousness of these men; they took possession of the obscured, veiled consciousness of these human beings and acted with *their* consciousness. And these beings who thus took possession, who are still sub-human beings, what kind of beings are they? We have to pose this question very seriously: What kind of beings are they?

Well, my dear friends, we have asked about the origin of human intelligence, about the origin of human intelligent behavior which, stating it simply, has its instrument in our head organism. And we have seen that this intelligent constitution of our soul stems from that deed of the Archangel Michael which is commonly presented in the symbol of the fall, the casting down of the Dragon. This is actually a very trivial symbol. For, if we really conceive of Michael and the Dragon, we have to visualize, first, the Michael Being, and, secondly, the Dragon who, in reality, consists of all that which enters into our so-called reason, into our intelligence. Not into a hell does Michael cast his opposing hosts, but into the human heads; there this Luciferic impulse continues to live. It has characterized human intelligence as an actual Luciferic impulse. Thus we

may say: if we look back into the evolution of the *Earth*, we find the *Michael-deed*, and to this Michael-deed is joined the illumination of man by his reason.

The sub-human beings whose main character consists of an impulse which strongly coincides with human willing, with the human power of will, now appear from *below*, as it were, whereas the hosts of forces cast down by Michael came from *above*; and while these latter took possession of the human power of will; they unite themselves with it and are beings produced by the realm of Ahriman. Ahrimanic influences acted through those obscured consciousnesses. Indeed, my dear friends, as long as one does not take into consideration these forces as forces objectively existing in the world just as one takes into consideration what today is called magnetism, electricity, and so forth, one will not gain an insight into that nature which, according to Goethe's prose *Hymn to Nature*, comprises man. For nature, as it is conceived of in today's natural science does not contain man, but merely the human physical self.

At the beginning of *Earth* becoming we have to do with a *downfall* of Luciferic beings; today we have a *rise* of Ahrimanic beings. The former beings influence the Luciferic power of thought, the latter the human power of will; we have to recognize the arrival of these latter beings within the evolution of mankind. We have to realize that these beings arrive and that we have to reckon with a conception of nature which, to be sure, for the time being only includes man; for the animal kingdom will only be included later on in the *Earth* period. Upon the animal these beings have no influences as yet. We shall not comprehend the human race without taking these beings into consideration. And these beings, who are, as it were, pushed from behind, for behind them there stands the Ahrimanic power which endows them with their strong will power, which pours into them their directive forces, — these beings who as such are sub-human beings are controlled in their totality by higher Ahrimanic spirits and thus contain something which far surpasses their own nature and being. Therefore they show something in their appearance which, if it takes the human being captive, acts much more strongly, very much more strongly than that which the weak human being can control today, if he does not strengthen it through the spirit. What is the aim of this host? Well, my dear friends, just as the hosts which Michael has pushed down have aimed at human illumination, at human permeation with reason, so these hosts aim at a certain permeation of human willing. And what do they want? They burrow, as it were, in the deepest stratum of consciousness in which the human being is still asleep today in his waking state. Man does not notice how these beings enter his soul and also his body. Here they suck in, with their power of attraction, everything that has remained Luciferic, that has not become Christ-permeated. This they can reach: this they can take possession of.

My dear friends, our time raises these problems for us. We must no longer pass by these things. They are not convenient. For it has become convenient for human beings to think differently, that is, not to think at all about man, not to take him into consideration at all. And it is not without danger to speak about these things in complete truth at a time when many people do not at all love the sense for truth, quite apart from the fact that false sentimentality might find these things a psychic cruelty.

The result of the comprehension of these things, however, will be a thorough grasp of the necessity of the Christ impulse. One must recognize where the Christ impulse is lacking. Yesterday we showed that in the middle stratum of consciousness the Christ impulse takes hold of the middle stratum of consciousness, if man really permeates himself with the Christ, then these Ahrimanic powers cannot penetrate through this middle stratum, upward, and they cannot, with their spiritual forces, pull down the intellectual forces. Everything depends on that.

It is very necessary today that we recognize the nature of the influences which come to us from extra-human, sub-human beings which in turn are influenced by other beings. They are just as important as many influences which are only rooted in the world of

man. A week ago I talked to you about the Michael influence. I have characterized this Michael influence for you. It is a very necessary one. For just as it is true that the Michael influence has brought about the Luciferic influencing of human intelligence, so true is it that now the counter-pole arises, namely, the appearance of certain Ahrimanic beings. And only through the constant activity of Michael is the human being armed against that which arises there. Even physiologically it is dangerous today to cling to mere nature necessity, to that kind of fatalism which is expressed in nature necessity. For education, through school and through life, in the concepts which are merely based upon nature necessity, upon the *omnipotence* of nature necessity, weakens the human head, and human beings become thereby so strongly *passive* in regard to their consciousness, that other forces are able to enter this consciousness, and human beings will fail to acquire the strength that is necessary for the reception into the human soul of the Christ impulse in its present form.

It is my duty, as it were, my dear friends, to speak at this time of the subject of which I have begun to speak today (I shall continue it tomorrow): of the appearance of certain Ahrimanic beings, which we have to take into account. Of this appearance numerous people upon earth are cognizant today. But they give it the wrong interpretation. They interpret it wrongly for the reason that they know nothing of the real triad Christ-Lucifer-Ahriman, or do not wish to know anything about it, but jumble up Ahriman and Lucifer. Then discrimination is impossible; then it is impossible properly to recognize the true fundamental character of these Ahrimanic beings who now arise. Only if we clearly elaborate the Ahrimanic element and know the nature of the supersensible influences which now arise as the counterpart, as it were, of Michael's casting down of the Dragon. It is like a lifting up, out of Ahrimanic depths, of certain beings. And these beings find special points of attack in the human being if the latter yields to unbridled instinctive impulses and does not strive for clarity in relation to them.

Now, there exists today a method I might call it an anti-method, of concealing the instinctive element, by putting down a concept and pushing another over it, so that it is impossible to form a proper judgment concerning it. Just think of the battle cry of the proletariat of the modern age. Behind this battle cry there stand very justified demands of mankind — I have often dealt with this. But these demands are not, to begin with, appealed to. In our idea of the three-fold social order they are appealed to for the first time. Something essentially different is appealed to: Proletarians of all countries, unite! What does this mean? It means: Foster your antipathy against the other classes, foster, as individuals, what resembles hate, and unite; that means, love one another, unite your feelings of hate, look for the love of one class, search among you for the love of the members of one class out of hate. Love one another out of hate, on the basis of hate. — There you have put down two concepts of opposing poles. This pushing back of instincts makes man's conceptions so nebulous, rendering him unable to know what he is dealing with in his own self. There actually exists a kind of anti-method, if I may use the paradoxical expression, in order to obscure, through present-day human thinking, the holding sway of an instinctive life which offers especially strong points of attack for the described Ahrimanic beings.

# *The Mission of the Archangel Michael*

## VI

### The Ancient Yoga Culture and the New Yoga Will. The Michael Culture of the Future

November 30, 1919

YOU HAVE seen from my lectures of the last few days that it is necessary, for a complete understanding of the human being, to distinguish the various members of the human organism and to realize the incisive difference between that which we may call the human head organization and that which constitutes the rest of the human organization. As you know, the rest of the human organization consists of two members, so that on the whole we obtain a three-fold membering, but for the comprehension of the significant impulses in mankind's evolution with which we are faced at the present time and in the immediate future the differentiation between head man and the organization of the rest of man is primarily important.

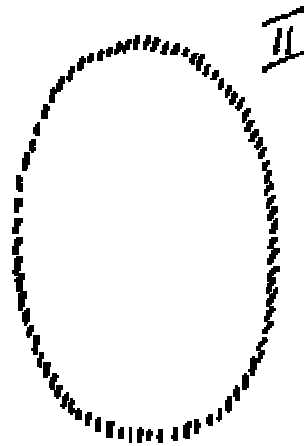
Now, if we speak spiritual-scientifically about the human being by differentiating between head man and the rest of man, then these two organizations are, at the outset, pictures for us, pictures created by nature herself for the soul element, for the spiritual element, whose expression and manifestation they are. Man is placed in the whole evolution of earth humanity in a way which becomes comprehensible only if one considers how different is the position of the head organization in this evolution from that of the rest of the human organization. Everything connected with the head organization, which chiefly manifests as man's life of thought, is something that reaches far back in the post-Atlantean evolution of mankind. When we focus our attention upon the *time* which followed immediately after the great Atlantean catastrophe, that is, the time of the sixth, seventh, eighth millennium before the Christian era, we shall find a soul mood holding sway in the regions of the civilized world of that period which can hardly be compared with our soul mood. The consciousness and whole conception of the world of the human being of that time can scarcely be compared with that which characterizes our sense perception and conceptual view of the world. In my *Occult Science, an Outline* {Anthroposophic Press, New York} I have called this culture which reaches back into such ancient times, the primeval Indian culture. We may say: the human head organism of that time was different from our present head organism to a great degree and the reckoning with space and time was not characteristic of this ancient people as it is of us. In surveying the world, they experienced a survey of immeasurable spatial distances, and they had a simultaneous experience of the various moments of time. The strong emphasis on space and time in world conception was not present in that ancient period.

The first indications of this we find toward the fifth and fourth millennium in the period we designate the *primeval Persian period*. But even then the whole mood of soul life is such that it can hardly be compared with the soul and world mood of the human being of our age. In that ancient time, the main concern of the human being is to interpret the things of the world as various shades of light, brilliancy, and darkness, obscurity. The abstractions in which we live today are completely foreign to that ancient earth population. There still exists a universal, all-embracing perception, a consciousness of the permeation of everything perceptible with light and its adumbration, shading, with various degrees of darkness. This was also the way the moral world order was conceived of. A human being who was benevolent and kind was experienced as a light, bright human being, one who was distrustful and selfish was



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experienced as a dark man. Man's moral individuality was, as it were, aurically perceived around him. And if we had talked to a man of this ancient, primeval Persian time about that which we call today the order of nature, he would not have understood a word of it. An order of nature in our sense did not exist in his world of light and shadow. For him, the world was a world of light and shadow; and in the world of tones, certain timbres of sounding he designated as light, bright, and certain other timbres of sounding he designated as dark, shadowy. And that which thus expressed itself through this element of light and darkness constituted for him the spiritual as well as the nature powers. For him, there existed no difference between spiritual and natural powers. Our present-day distinction between natural necessity and human freedom would have appeared to him as mere folly, for this duality of human arbitrary will and the necessity of nature did not exist for him. Everything was to be included for him in one spiritual — physical unity. If I were to give you a pictorial interpretation of the character of this primeval-Persian world conception, I would have to draw the following line. (It will receive its full meaning only through that which will follow.)



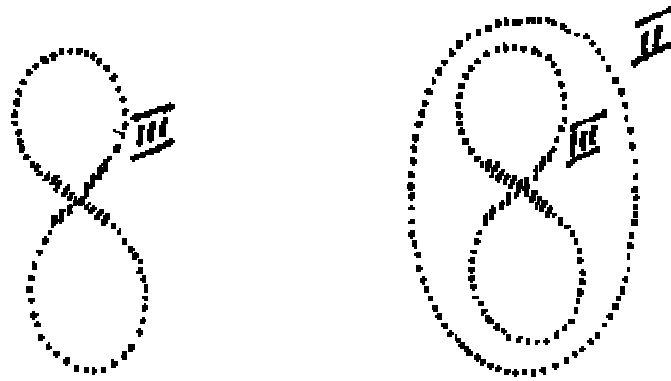
Then after this soul mood of man had held sway for somewhat more than two thousand years, there appeared a soul mood, the echoes of which we can still perceive in the *Chaldean*, in the *Egyptian* world conception, and in a special form in the world conception whose reflection is preserved for us in the Old Testament. There something appears which is closer to our own world conception. There the first inkling of a certain necessity of nature enters human thoughts. But this necessity of nature is still far removed from that which we call today the mechanical or even the vital order of nature; at that time, natural events are conceived of as identical with Divine willing, with Providence. Providence and nature events are still one. Man knew that if he moved his hand it was the Divine within him, permeating him, that moved his hand, that moved his arm. When a tree was shaken by the wind, the perception of the shaking tree was no different for him from the perception of the moving arm. He saw the *same* divine power, as Providence, in his own movements and in the movements of the tree. But a distinction was made between the God without and the God within; he was, however, conceived of as unitary, the God in nature, the God in man; he was the same. And it was clear to human beings of that time that there is something in man whereby Providence that is outside in nature and Providence that is inside in man meet one another.

At that time, man's process of breathing was sensed in this way. People said: If a tree is shaking, this is the God outside, and if I move my arm, it is the God inside; if I

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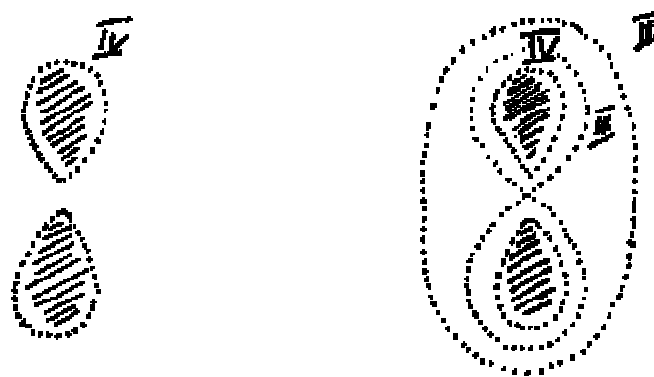
inhale the air, work it over within me, and again exhale it, then it is the God from outside who enters me and again leaves me. Thus the same divine element was sensed as being outside and inside, but simultaneously, in one point, outside and inside; people said to themselves: By being a breathing being, I am a being of nature outside and at the same time I am myself.

If I am to characterize the world conception of the third culture period by a line, as I have done for the primeval Persian world conception by the line of the preceding drawing, I shall have to characterize it through the following line:



This line represents, on the one hand, the existence of nature outside, on the other hand, human existence, crossing over into the other at the one point, in the breathing process.

Matters become different in the fourth age, in the *Graeco-Latin age*. Here the human being is abruptly confronted by the contrast outside-inside, of nature existence and human existence. Man begins to feel the contrast between himself and nature. And if I am again to draw characteristically how man begins to feel in the Greek age, I will have to draw it this way: on the one hand he senses the external and on the other the internal; between the two there is no longer the crossing point.



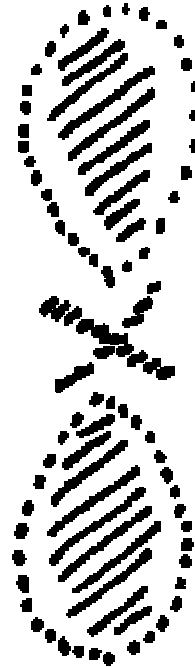
What man has in common with nature remains outside his consciousness. It falls away from consciousness. In Indian Yoga an attempt is made to bring it into consciousness again. Therefore Indian Yoga culture is an atavistic returning to previous evolutionary stages of mankind, because an attempt is made again to bring into consciousness the process of breathing, which in the third age was felt in a natural way as that in which one existed outside and inside simultaneously. The fourth age begins in the eighth pre-Christian century. At that time the late-Indian Yoga exercises were developed which tried to call back, atavistically, that which mankind had possessed at earlier times, quite particularly in the Indian culture, but which had been lost.

Thus, this consciousness of the breathing process was lost. And if one asks: Why did Indian Yoga culture try to call it back, what did it believe it would gain thereby? one

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has to answer: What was intended to be gained thereby was a real understanding of the outer world. For through the fact that the breathing process was understood in the third cultural age, something was understood within man that at the same time was something external.

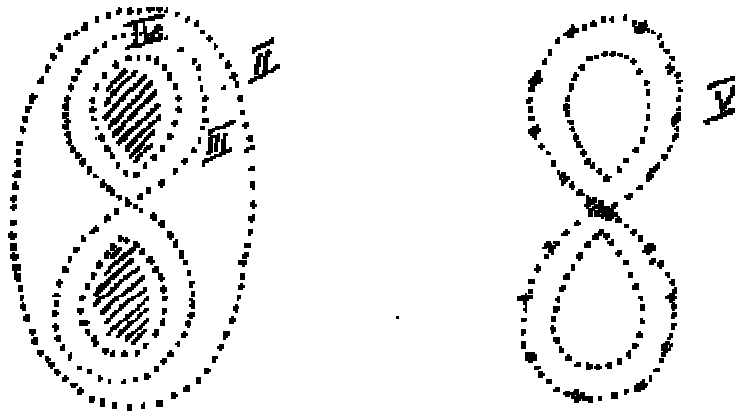
This must again be attained; on another path, however. We live still under the after-effects of the culture in which a twofold element is present in the human soul mood, for the fourth period ends only around the year 1413, really only about the middle of the fifteenth century. We have, through our head organization, an incomplete nature conception, that which we call the external world; and we have through our inner organization, through the organization of the rest of man, an incomplete knowledge of ourselves.



That in which we could perceive a process of the world and at the same time a process of ourselves is eliminated; it does not exist for us.

It is now a question of consciously regaining that which has been lost. That means, we have to acquire the ability of taking hold of something that is in our inner being, that belongs to the outer and the inner world simultaneously, and which reaches into both.

This must be the endeavor of the fifth post-Atlantean period; namely, the endeavor to find something in the human inner life in which an outer process takes place at the same time.



You will remember that I have pointed to this important fact; I have pointed to it in my last article in *Soziale Zukunft* (The Social Future) {*Soziale Zukunft*, Vol. III: *Geistesleben, Rechtsordnung, Wirtschaft* (Spiritual Life, Rights order, Economy), Vol. IV: *Dreigliederung und soziales Vertrauen* (The Threefold Social Order and Social Confidence) (not translated into English) where I seemingly dealt with these things in their importance for *social* life, but where I clearly pointed to the very necessity of finding something which the human being lays hold of *within himself* and which he, at the same time, recognizes as a process of the *world*. We as modern human beings cannot attain this by going back to Yoga culture; that has passed. For the breathing process itself has changed. This, of course, you cannot prove clinically; but the breathing process has become a different one since the third post-Atlantean cultural period. Roughly speaking, we might say: In the third post-soul; today he breathes air. Not only our thoughts have become materialistic; *reality itself has lost its soul*.

I beg you, my dear friends, not to see something negligible in what I am now saying. For just consider what it means that reality itself, in which mankind lives, has been transformed so that the air we breathe is something *different* from what it was four millennia ago. Not only the consciousness of mankind has changed, oh no! there was soul in the atmosphere of the earth. The air was the soul. This is it no longer today, or, rather, it is soul in a different way. The spiritual beings of *elemental nature* of whom I have spoken yesterday, they penetrate into you, they can be breathed if one practices Yoga breathing today. But that which was attainable in *normal* breathing three millennia ago cannot be brought back artificially. That it may be brought back is the great illusion of the Orientals. What I am stating here describes a reality. The ensouling of the air which belongs to the human being no longer exists. And therefore the beings of whom I spoke yesterday — I should like to call them the anti-Michaelic beings — are able to penetrate into the air and, through the air, into the human being, and in this way they enter into mankind, as I have described it yesterday. We are only able to drive them away if we put in the place of Yoga that which is the right thing for today. We must strive for this. We can only strive for that which is the right thing for today if we become conscious of a much more subtle relation of man to the external world, so that in regard to our ether body something takes place which must enter our consciousness more and more, similar to the breathing process. In the breathing process, we inhale fresh oxygen and exhale unusable carbon. A similar process takes place in all our sense perceptions. Just think, my dear friends, that you see something — let us take a radical case — suppose you see a flame. There a process takes place that may be compared with inhalation, only it is much finer. If you then close your eyes — and you can make similar experiments with every one of your senses — you have the after-image of the flame which gradually changes — dies down, as Goethe said. Apart from the purely physical aspect, the human ether body is essentially engaged in this process of reception of the light impression and its eventual dying down. Something very significant is contained in this process: it contains the soul element which, three millennia ago, was breathed in

and out with the air. And we must learn to realize the sense process, permeated by the soul element in a similar way we have realized the breathing process three millennia ago.

You see, my dear friends, this is connected with the fact that man, three millennia ago, lived in a night culture. Yahve revealed himself through his prophets out of the dreams of the night. But we must endeavor to receive in our intimate intercourse with the world not merely sense perceptions, but also the spiritual element. It must become a certainty for us that with every ray of light, with every tone, with every sensation of heat and its dying down we enter into a soul-intercourse with the world, and this soul-intercourse must become significant for us. We can help ourselves to bring this about.

I have described to you the occurrence of the Mystery of Golgotha in the fourth post-Atlantean period which, if we wish to be accurate, begins with the year 747 B.C. and ends with the year 1413 A.D. The Mystery of Golgotha occurred in the first third of this period, and it was comprehended at the outset, with the remnants of the ancient mode of thought and culture. This ancient way of comprehending the Mystery of Golgotha is exhausted and a new way of comprehension must take its place. The ancient way does no longer suffice, and many attempts that have been made to enable human thinking to grasp the Mystery of Golgotha have proved unsuitable to reach up to it.

You see, dear friends, all external-material things have their spiritual-soul aspect, and all things that appear in the spiritual-soul sphere have their external-material aspect. The fact that the air of the earth has become soul-void, making it impossible for man to breathe the originally ensouled air, had a significant spiritual effect in the evolution of mankind. For through being able to breathe in the soul to which he was originally related, as is stated at the beginning of the Old Testament: "And God breathed into man the breath as living soul," man had the possibility of becoming conscious of the pre-existence of the soul, of the existence of the soul before it had descended into the physical body through birth or through conception. To the degree the breathing process ceased to be ensouled the human being lost the consciousness of the pre-existence of the soul. Even at the time of Aristotle in the fourth post-Atlantean period it was no longer possible to understand, with the human power of comprehension, the pre-existence of the soul. It was utterly impossible.

We are faced with the strange historical fact that the greatest event, the Christ Event, breaks in upon the evolution of the earth, yet mankind must first become mature in order to comprehend it. At the outset, it is still capable of catching the rays of the Mystery of Golgotha with the remnants of the power of comprehension originating in primeval culture. But this power of comprehension is gradually lost, and dogmatism moves further and further away from an understanding of the Mystery of Golgotha. The Church forbids the belief in the pre-existence of the soul — not because pre-existence is incompatible with the Mystery of Golgotha, but because the human power of comprehension ceased to experience the consciousness of pre-existence as a force, the air having become soul-void. Pre-existence vanishes from head-consciousness. *When our sense processes will become ensouled again*, we shall have established a crossing point, and in this crossing point we shall take hold of the human will that streams up, out of the third stratum of consciousness, as I have described it to you recently. Then we shall, at the same time, have the subjective-objective element for which Goethe was longing so very much. We shall have the possibility of grasping, in a sensitive way, the peculiar nature of the sense process of man in its relation to the outer world. Man's conceptions are very coarse and clumsy, indeed, which maintain that the outer world merely acts upon us and we, in turn, merely react upon it. In reality, there takes place a soul process from the outside toward the inside, which is taken hold of by the deeply subconscious, inner soul process, so that the two processes overlap. From outside, cosmic thoughts work into us, from inside, humanity's will works outward. *Humanity's will and cosmic thought cross* in this crossing point, just as the objective and the subjective element once crossed in the breath. We must learn to feel how our will

works through our eyes and how the activity of the senses delicately mingles with the passivity, bringing about the crossing of cosmic thoughts and humanity's will. We must develop this *new Yoga will*. Then something will be imparted to us that of like nature to that which was imparted to human beings in the breathing process three millennia ago. Our comprehension must become more soul-like, much more spiritual.

Goethe's world conception strove in this direction. Goethe endeavored to recognize the *pure phenomenon*, which he called the primal phenomenon, by arranging the phenomena which work upon man in the external world, without the interference of the Luciferic thought which stems from the head of man himself; this thought was only to serve in the arranging of the phenomena. Goethe did not strive for the law of nature, but for the primal phenomenon; this is what is significant with him. If, however, we arrive at this pure phenomenon, this primal phenomenon, we have something in the outer world which makes it possible for us to sense the unfolding of our will in the perception of the outer world, and then we shall lift ourselves to something *objective-subjective*, as it still was contained, for instance, in the ancient Hebrew doctrine. We must learn not merely to speak of the contrast between the material and the spiritual, but we must recognize the interplay of the material and the spiritual in a unity precisely in sense perception. If we no longer look at nature merely materially and, further, if we do not "think into it" a soul element, as Gustave Theodore Fechner did, then something will arise which will signify for us what the Yahve culture signified for mankind three millennia ago. If we learn, in nature, to receive the soul element together with sense perception, then we shall have the Christ relationship to outer nature. This Christ relationship to outer nature will be something like a kind of spiritual breathing process.

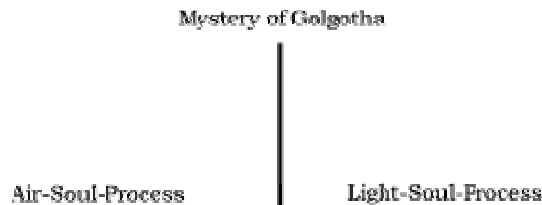
We shall be aided by realizing more and more, with our sound common sense, that pre-existence lies at the basis of our soul existence. We must supplement the purely egotistical conception of post-existence, which springs merely from our longing to exist after death, by the knowledge of the pre-existence of the soul. We must again rise to the conception of the real eternity of the soul. This is what may be called Michael culture. If we move through the world with the consciousness that with every look we direct outward, with every tone we hear, something spiritual, something of the nature of the soul element stream out into the world, we have gained the consciousness which mankind needs for the future.

I return once more to the image: You see a flame. You shut your eyes and have the after-image which ebbs away. Is that merely a subjective process? Yes, says the modern physiologist. But this is not true. In the *cosmic ether* this signifies an objective process, just as in the air the presence of carbonic acid which you exhale signifies an objective process. You are dealing here with the objective element; you have the possibility of knowing that something which takes place within you is at the same time a delicate cosmic process, if you become but conscious of it. If I look at a flame, close my eyes, let it ebb away — it will ebb away even though I keep my eyes open, only then I will not notice it — then I experience a process which does not merely take place within me, but which takes place in the world. But this is not only the case in regard to the flame, if I confront a human being and say: this man has said this or that, which may be true or untrue, this then constitutes a judgment, a moral or intellectual act of my inner nature. This ebbs away like a flame. If I confront a human being and say: this man has said this or that, which may be true or untrue, this then constitutes a judgment, a moral or intellectual act of my inner nature. This ebbs away like the flame. It is an objective world process. If you think something good about your fellow-man: it ebbs away and is an objective process in the cosmic ether; if you think something evil: it ebbs away as an objective process. You are unable to conceal your perceptions and judgments about the world. You seemingly carry them on in your own being, but they are at the same time an objective world process. Just as people of the third period were conscious of the fact that the breathing process is a process that takes place simultaneously within man and in the objective world, so mankind must become aware in the future that the soul

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element of which I spoke is at the same time an objective world process.

This transformation of consciousness demands greater strength of soul than is ordinarily developed by the human being of today. To permeate oneself with this consciousness means to permit the Michael culture to enter. Just as it was self-evident for the man of the second and third pre-Christian millennium to think of the *air* as ensouled — so must it become self-evident for us to think of *light* as ensouled; we must arouse this ability in us when we consider light the general representative of sense perception. We must thoroughly do away with the habit of seeing in light what which our materialistic age is accustomed to see in it. We must entirely cease to believe that merely those vibrations emanate from the sun of which, out of the modern consciousness, physics and people in general speak. We must become clear about the fact that the soul element penetrates through cosmic space upon the pinions of light; and we must realize, at the same time, that this was not the case in the period preceding our age. That which approaches mankind today through light approached mankind of that former period through the air. You see here an objective difference in the earth process. Expressing this in a comprehensive concept, we may say, *Air-soul-process*, *Light-soul-process*. This is what may be observed in the evolution of the earth. The Mystery of Golgotha signifies the transition from the one period to the other.



My dear friends, it does not suffice, for the present age nor for the future age of mankind, to speak in abstractions about the spiritual, to fall into some sort of nebulous pantheism; on the contrary, we must begin to recognize that that which today is sensed as a merely material process is permeated by soul.

It is a question of learning to say the following: there was a time prior to the Mystery of Golgotha when the earth had an atmosphere which contained the soul element that belongs to the soul of man. Today, the earth has an atmosphere which is devoid of this soul element. The same soul element that was previously in the air has now entered the light which embraces us from morning to evening. This was made possible through the fact that the Christ has united Himself with the earth. Thus, also from the soul-spiritual aspect, air and light underwent a change in the course of the *Earth* evolution.

My dear friends, it is a childish presentation that describes air and light in the same manner, purely materially, throughout the millennia in which *Earth* evolution unfolded. Air and light have changed inwardly. We live in an atmosphere and in a light sphere that are different from those in which our souls lived in previous earthly incarnations. To learn to recognize the externally-material as a soul-spirited element: this is what matters. If we describe purely material existence in the customary manner and then add, as a kind of decoration: this material existence contains everywhere the spiritual! This will not produce genuine spiritual science. My dear friends, people are very strange in this respect; they are intent on withdrawing to the abstract. But what is necessary is the following: in the future we must cease to differentiate abstractly between the material and the spiritual, but we must look for the spiritual in the material itself and describe it as such; and we must recognize in the spiritual the transition into the material and its mode of action in the material. Only if we have attained this shall we be able to gain a true knowledge of man himself. "Blood is quite a special fluid," but the fluid physiology speaks about today is not a "special fluid," it is merely a fluid whose

chemical composition one attempts to analyze in the same way any other substance is analyzed; it is nothing special. But if we have gained the starting point of being able to understand the metamorphosis of air and light from the soul aspect, we shall gradually advance to the soul-spiritual comprehension of the human being himself, in every respect; then we shall not have abstract matter and abstract spirit, but spirit, soul, and body working into one another. *This will be Michael-culture.*

This is what our time demands. This is what ought to be grasped with all the fibers of the soul life by those human beings who wish to understand the present time. Whenever something out of the ordinary had to be introduced into human world conception it met with resistance. I have often quoted the following neat example: In 1837 (not even a century ago), the learned Medical College of Bavaria was asked, when the construction of the first railroad from Fuerth to Nuremberg was proposed, whether it was hygienically safe to build such a railroad. The Medical College answered (I am not telling a fairy tale, the documents concerning it exist): Such a railroad should not be built, for people who would use such a means of transportation would become nervously ill. And they added: Should there be such people who insist on such railroads, then, it is absolutely necessary to erect, on the right and left side of the tracks, high plank walls to prevent the people whom the train passes from getting concussion of the brain. Here you see, my dear friends, such a judgment is one thing; quite another is the course which the evolution of mankind takes. Today we smile about such a document as that of the Bavarian Medical College of 1837; but we are not altogether justified in smiling; for, if something similar occurs today, we behave in quite the same manner. And, after all, the Bavarian Medical College was not entirely wrong. If we compare the state of nerves of modern mankind with that of mankind two centuries ago, then we must say that people have become nervous. Perhaps the Medical College has exaggerated the matter a bit, but people did become nervous. Now, in regard to the evolution of mankind it is imperative that certain impulses which try to enter *Earth* evolution really should enter and not be rejected. That which from time to time wishes to enter human cultural development is often very inconvenient for people, it does not agree with their indolence, and what is duty in regard to human cultural development must be recognized by learning to read the objective facts, and must not be derived from human indolence, not even from a refined kind of indolence. I am concluding today's lecture with these words because there is no doubt that a strongly increasing battle will take place between anthroposophical cognition and the various creeds. We can see the signs for this on all sides. The creeds who wish to remain in the old beaten tracks, who do not wish to arouse themselves to a new knowledge of the Mystery of Golgotha, will reinforce their strong fighting position which they already have taken up, and it would be very frivolous, my dear friends, if we would remain unconscious of the fact that this battle has started.

I myself, you can be sure, am not at all eager for such a battle, particularly not for a battle with the Roman Catholic Church which, it seems, is forced upon us from the other side with such violence. He who, after all, thoroughly knows the deeper historical impulses of the creeds of our time will be very unwilling to fight time-honored institutions. But if the battle is forced upon us, it is not to be avoided! And the clergy of our day is not in the least inclined to open its doors to that which *has* to enter: the spiritual-scientific world conception. Remember the grotesque quotations I read to you recently where it was said that people should inform themselves about anthroposophically-oriented spiritual science through the writings of my opponents, since Roman-Catholics are forbidden by the Pope to read my own writings. This is not a light matter, my dear friends; it is a very serious matter! A battle which arises in such a manner, which is capable of disseminating such a judgment in the world, such a battle is not to be taken lightly. And what is more; it is not to be taken lightly since we do not enter it willingly. Let us take the example of the Roman-Catholic Church, my dear friends; matters are not different in regard to the Protestant Church, but the Roman-



Catholic church is more powerful — and we have to consider time-honored institutions: if one understands the significance of the vestments of the priest when he reads the Holy Mass, the meaning of every single piece of his priestly garments, if one understands every single act of the Holy Mass, then one knows that they are sacred, time-honored establishments; they are establishments more ancient than Christianity for the Holy Mass is a ritual of the ancient Mystery culture, transformed in the Christian sense. And modern clergy who uses such weapons as described above lives in these rituals! Thus, if one has, on the one hand, the deepest veneration for the existing rituals and symbolism, and sees, on the other hand, how insufficient is the defense of and how serious are the attacks against that which wishes to enter mankind's evolution, then one becomes aware of the earnestness that is necessary in taking a stand in these matters. It is truly something worth deep study and consideration. What is thus heralded from that side is only at its beginnings; and it is not right to sleep in regard to it; on the contrary, we have to sharpen our perception for it. During the two decades in which the Anthroposophical Movement has been fostered in Middle Europe, we could indulge in sectarian somnolence which was so hard to combat in our own ranks and which still today sits so deeply embedded in the souls of the human beings who have entered the Anthroposophical Movement. But the time has passed in which we might have been allowed to indulge in sectarian somnolence. That which I have often emphasized here is deeply true, namely, that it is necessary that we should grasp the world-historical significance of the Anthroposophical Movement and overlook trifles, but that we should also consider the small impulses as serious and great.

## *The Mission of the Archangel Michael*

Signs of the Times  
Michael's Battle and Its Reflection On Earth

Two Lectures by Rudolf Steiner,  
Munich, February 14 and 17, 1918

I

*Munich, February 14, 1918*

AT THE PRESENT time of severe trials it must be quite natural to anyone who has a heartfelt interest in the endeavors of anthroposophical spiritual science to reflect upon the relations existing between the fact that this spiritual-scientific movement started at the beginning of the twentieth century to send its impulses into the evolution of mankind and the other fact that mankind of the present age has been engulfed by catastrophic events. How catastrophic these events are for mankind has not yet been fully understood, for people are accustomed today to a life without the spirit. To live without the spirit, however, is to live superficially; and to live superficially causes human beings to sleep away the important impressions of the events taking place around them. To sleep through important events is a special characteristic of the human being of the present age. There are few people today who arrive at an adequate conception of the severity and incisiveness of present-day events. Most of them live from day to day. If an attempt is made to speak of a time which might come later, people — and in many instances precisely those upon whom matters depend — reject it most violently. If among its many tasks spiritual science succeeds in making the human soul more energetic, more awake, it will have fulfilled an important one for our present time.

Spiritual-scientific concepts demand a greater exertion of thinking, a greater intensity of feeling than is employed in other concepts, particularly those current in our time.

It is important today to become acquainted with the concepts of spiritual research which can direct and guide us in the understanding of the present age in the most comprehensive sense. Today I shall develop some fundamental concepts upon which we shall build ideas in our next lecture which will throw light upon important factors of the present age. I shall proceed from more general thoughts, touching upon the personal in man, which, from a certain point of view, will furnish the foundation for our subsequent spiritual-scientific considerations.

My dear friends, in the course of our spiritual-scientific studies we must, again and again, emphasize the fact that a change in our state of consciousness runs through our life between birth or conception and death: the change between sleeping and waking. In a general sense, we know the difference between sleeping and waking; in a more intimate way, only spiritual-scientific perception is able to demonstrate to the human soul the true difference between sleeping and waking. In ordinary life we believe that we sleep from falling asleep until awakening, and that we are awake from awakening until falling asleep. But this is only an approximate truth. In reality, the boundary between sleeping and waking is incorrectly drawn. For the state of dull consciousness, which in many respects is unconsciousness, through which we pass as the sleep state extends into our day life; we are also within this state with a part of our being between awakening and falling asleep. We are by no means awake with our entire being between awakening and falling asleep; we are awake only with a part of it and another part continues to sleep even though we consider ourselves to be awake. We are always, in a certain respect, sleeping human beings. It is really so. We are really awake only in regard to our perception and our thinking. By perceiving the external world through our senses, by hearing, seeing, and perceiving. We are completely awake there. We are also awake, although to a lesser degree, in thinking, visualizing. When we form thoughts, when visualizations arise in us, when memories emerge out of the dark recesses of our soul life, we are awake in regard to the processes which we experience. We are awake in regard to the processes of perception and thinking.

You know, however, that besides perception and thinking, our soul life contains feeling and willing. In regard to feeling we are not awake, even though we believe we are. The degree, the intensity of consciousness we have while feeling equals the degree and intensity of consciousness we have while dreaming. And just as dreams arise as pictures out of the unconscious recesses of our souls, so do feelings arise as forces in us. In feeling we are awake to the same degree as in dreaming; the only difference is this: we carry our dreams over from sleep into ordinary waking consciousness, remembering them and thus distinguishing them from the waking state, while in the case of feelings all this takes place simultaneously. Feeling itself is being dreamt in us, but we accompany our feeling with our conceptions. Feeling is not within the conceptions, but we look from conceptions upon feeling just as we look back, after awakening, upon the dream. And since we do this, simultaneously in the case of feeling, we are not aware of the fact that we have only the *conception of feeling* in actual consciousness, while feeling itself remains in the dream region, like any dream.

And will itself, my dear friends! What do you know of the process occurring when you resolve to take hold of a book and your hand then actually seized the book? What do you know of that which takes place between your conscious thought: "I want to take hold of the book," and the mysterious processes then occurring in your organism? We know what we *think* about willing, but *willing itself* remains unknown to us in ordinary consciousness. Whereas we "dream away" our feeling, we "sleep away" the actual, essential content of our willing.

Through perception and thinking we learn to know a world around us which we designate as the physical-sense world; through feeling and willing we do not learn to

know the world in which we exist as feeling and willing human beings. We are constantly in a supersensible world; the forces of our feeling and willing originate in this supersensible world, just as our perception and thinking originate in the physical world. We have no bodily organs for feeling and willing; we do have bodily organs for perception and thinking. Many physiologists believe that organs for feeling and willing exist; this shows that they do not know what they are talking about. Physiologists who really *think* do not believe this.

What I have described above is the ordered state in which we live between birth and death, a state in which we are awake in regard to perception and thinking, but asleep in regard to feeling and willing.

The condition is different between death and a new birth; it is reversed, in a certain sense. We begin then to be awake in regard to our feeling and willing, and we sleep away our perception, our thinking, although sleep is a different state in the world in which we then dwell with our souls. From what I have just stated you will see that the so-called dead are different from the so-called living in that the so-called living sleep away feeling and willing which constantly stream through their being; the dead stand within this feeling and willing. It will not be difficult for you to understand that the dead dwell in the same world in which we dwell as the so-called living. We are separated from the dead merely because we do not perceive the world in which they live and weave. The dead are always around us; we are surrounded also by those being who live without having physically incarnated. We only fail to perceive them.

You need only form the conception of a human being sleeping in a room: objects are around him, but he does not perceive them. The fact that something is not perceived is no proof that it is not there. In regard to the world of the dead we are in exactly the same position in which we are in regard to the world of physical beings while we sleep. We live in the same world with the dead and with the higher hierarchies: they are in our midst, but we are separated from them merely through the nature of our consciousness.

My dear friends, from this it follows that the human being perceives and understands only a part of that reality within which he actually exists. If the human being were to grasp full reality, his knowledge would be quite different from what it is today. This knowledge, then, would be comprised not only of the forces that come from the kingdom of nature known to us, but also of the forces of the higher spiritual beings and the forces that come from the realm of the so-called dead. Today these facts are considered extremely grotesque by the great majority of people. Yet, for ever wider circles of mankind and especially for those whose concern it is to be interested in the evolution and progress of human life these ideas should become a matter that must be penetrated by cognition. For right up to our time, more or less, the human being was guided by dark, unknown forces in regard to all that he cannot perceive in his surroundings. Guidance by these obscure, unknown forces has more or less ceased in our age. (We shall have to speak about this in our next lecture.) Today the human being must enter into conscious relationship with certain forces which reach over into our world from the realm of the so-called dead. — It will not be easy to make human beings conscious of these things to the degree that is necessary in order to put the real, the true in the place of the fantastic inadequateness which pervades our age and which has brought about such great catastrophes. In regard to this I should like to draw your attention to only one point, on fact:

Among the many so-called “scientific” courses there are historical studies. History is taught and studied in schools. But what is this history? Any well-informed person who is acquainted with the literature of earlier times knows that what today is called the science of history is not much more than a hundred years old. I do not want to say more about this. People consider and write history with the same thoughts and concepts they employ in external ordinary life when observing nature. But no one asks whether it is permissible to observe historical life in the same way one observes external nature. It is

not permissible. For the historical life of mankind is governed by impulses which cannot be grasped with the concepts of our waking consciousness. Anyone who is really able to observe history knows that we are governed by impulses in historical life which, for ordinary consciousness, are only accessible to the dream state. Just as mankind dreams away the life of feeling, so it dreams away the impulses of history. If we attempt to observe the historical life of mankind with the concepts which are excellent for natural science, we cannot truly grasp it: we observe it only on its surface. What is it that is taught and studied as history in the schools? It is nothing more, in regard to real history, than the description of a corpse is in regard to the whole human being. History as it is taught today is the study of a corpse. The study of history must undergo a complete transformation. In the future it will only be possible to understand what works in history with inspired concepts, with inspiration. Then we shall have *true* history. Then we shall know what is in that governs mankind, what it is that works from historical life into social life.

My dear friends, what I am stating here has a deep significance. People think they understand social-historical life. They do not understand it, because they want to grasp it with the ordinary concepts of daily waking life. This does not become evident when history is written, for little seems to depend upon whether or not the facts are actually true. I should like to give you an example of this: We learn from history books that America was discovered in 1492. Generally speaking, this is correct; but from what is thus written in history books we form the conception that prior to 1492 America was completely unknown, as far as we may go back in history. But this is not the case. America was unknown for only a few centuries. Still in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries there existed a lively traffic between Iceland, Ireland and America. Medical herbs and other goods were imported into Europe from America. For certain reasons connected with the inner karma of Europe and the early role of Ireland, Rome made every possible effort to cut Europe off from America so that America would be forgotten. This effort on the part of Rome was not detrimental to European conditions at the time; it was well meant.

I only intend to show by this example that a fact need not necessarily be a historical fact; that we may be completely ignorant historically regarding an important matter.

To have historical knowing or to be historically ignorant in regard to the social life of mankind is, on the other hand, of great importance. How often today do we hear people say: we must think thus and so about this or that event because history teaches thus and so. Take modern literature, especially present-day magazines and newspapers and you will see how often the phrase is employed: "History teaches thus and so," The human being partly sleeps away the historical events in the midst of which he lives, but he nevertheless forms a judgment about them or one is inculcated in him. The phrase: "history teaches thus and so" is very frequently heard, and at the beginning of the war, important men states what history taught them concerning the duration of the war. It was the honest conviction of the so-called "clever people" that, according to the general social and economic conditions of the earth, the war could not last longer than from four to six months! The outcome of this prophecy was similar to that of another historical prophecy made by a much greater spirit, to be sure, but which was formed by the ordinary conceptions of ever-day consciousness. Such conceptions cannot lay hold of history, because history is dreamt away, even partly slept away. It can only be grasped with great concepts. When Friedrich von Schiller became professor of philosophy at the University of Jena, he delivered his world-famous inaugural speech about the study of history. This was shortly before the outbreak of the French Revolution. He stated his conviction derived from history but gained with ordinary concepts. I am not quoting literally, but the following is what Schiller, who certainly was not an insignificant personality, propounded as his conviction: History teaches that many quarrels and wars occurred in ancient times, and from what took place then we can expect disharmony among the European peoples in the future. They will, however, consider themselves

members of a great family and will no longer tear each other to pieces. — thus Friedrich von Schiller. Shortly thereafter in 1789, the French Revolution broke out. All that befell the European family of peoples in the nineteenth century, and what is happening now, so many years later, has certainly annihilated the co-called historical judgment of Schiller in a most thorough fashion.

History will only teach us something if we are able to penetrate it with inspired concepts. For the historical life of mankind is influenced not only by the so-called living, but by the souls of the dead, by the spirits with whom the so-called dead live, just as we live with the beings of the animal, plant, and mineral realms. Mankind attaches great value to mere phrases. But it must wean itself from this habit. It can do so only if it acquires true concepts, concepts permeated with reality. A very important concept is that which shows us that we are separated from the so-called dead only through our consciousness which is a sleeping consciousness in regard to the world of feeling and willing in which the dead surround us. It is a sleeping consciousness similar to the consciousness in which we dwell between falling asleep and awakening as regards the physical objects around us. It is a sleeping consciousness similar to the consciousness in which we dwell between falling asleep and awakening as regards the physical objects around us.

Clairvoyant consciousness confirms, step by step, that which has been characterized here in general terms.

The question, however, may arise: How is it that the human being knows nothing about the world in which he lives, through which he passes with every step of his life? Well, my dear friends, the very way in which clairvoyant consciousness offers concrete enlightenment concerning the intercourse with the so-called dead is the living proof of the fact that for ordinary consciousness the world in which the dead live must remain unknown. I need only relate some of the characteristic traits of this intercourse with the so-called dead which may take place with developed clairvoyant consciousness, and you will see from this why we know nothing in ordinary life about this intercourse with the dead. It is possible — although it is, in a certain respect, a very delicate matter — still, it is possible that the world of the dead may lay itself open to awakened consciousness, that the world of the dead may be perceived by the human being, that he may enter into conscious relationship with the individual dead person. The human being must, however, acquire a completely different consciousness if he wishes to enter into an actual and secure relation with the dead person. He must acquire a consciousness which is completely different from the one employed in the physical world. Let me describe here a few characteristic traits.

In the physical world we have certain habits in our relation to another human being. If I speak to someone here on the physical plane, ask him something, communicate something to him, I am conscious of the fact that the speech proceeds from my soul, through my speech organs, and passes over to him. I am conscious of the fact that I speak. I am conscious of this fact also in regard to external perception. And if this other human being here on the physical plane answers me or communicates something to me, then I hear his words, his words sound out to me.

This is not the case in fully conscious intercourse with the dead. (In half-conscious intercourse the matter is somewhat different, but I am speaking here of fully conscious intercourse.) In fully conscious intercourse with the dead matters are reversed. They are quite different from what we expect. When I confront the dead person, he speaks in his soul what I intend to ask him or what I wish to communicate to him: this sounds out to me from *him*. And what he intends to say to me sounds out of my *own* soul. We have to become accustomed to this, my dear friends. We must accustom ourselves to hearing what the other person says as sounding out of the spiritual outer world. This is so different from everything we are accustomed to experience here in the physical world that it does not occur to us at all to take any stand in regard to it. For just consider the

following: At one time or another in life something speaks within your soul. You certainly will ascribe it to yourself. The human being is in certain respects egotistical, and if something arises within his soul he is inclined to ascribe it to his own imagination, to his own genius. We only learn to recognize through clairvoyant consciousness that much that arises in our souls is in truth told us by the dead. The realm of the dead constantly plays into our will, into our feeling. Something arises in us which we may call a good idea: in truth it is a communication from the dead. We also are unfamiliar with the other aspect of the matter and pay no attention to what may appear, out of the grey spiritual environment, as if it were our own thoughts surrounding us. If a human being can be sufficiently objective in regard to his own thoughts to experience them as if they were hovering around him, then the dead understand these thoughts.

It is true that the human being, even in ordinary consciousness, is in connection with the dead, but he does not become aware of it because he is not able to interpret the facts which I have just described. For we must realize that besides sleeping, waking and dreaming, we have two other states of consciousness. We have two other, extraordinarily important states of consciousness, but we pay not attention to them in ordinary life. We fail to pay attention to them for a certain reason which you will appreciate at once when I name these two states of consciousness: we have the state of falling asleep and the state of waking up. They are of short duration and pass so quickly that we pay no attention to their content. But the most important things occur at the moment of falling asleep and the moment of waking up. If we learn to know the real nature of these two moments, we shall, in a certain respect, acquire the right concepts concerning the relationship of the human being to the world in which the dead co-exist with us.

Man is constantly in connection with the world of the dead, and this connection is especially vivid at the moment of falling asleep and the moment of waking up. Clairvoyant consciousness shows that at the moment of falling asleep the human being is especially fitted to ask questions of the dead, give information to the dead; in general, to turn to the dead. At the moment of waking up the human being is especially fitted to receive communications, messages from the dead. He receives them rapidly and since he wakes up directly afterwards, they pass him by quickly and the tumult of waking life drowns them out. Not so long ago, more primitive people in their atavistic state knew these facts and they hinted at them; but under the influence of our materialistic culture such things perish even in remote regions. Anyone who grew up among the old peasants in rural districts knows that one of their fundamental rules was that on awakening in the morning one should remain quiet for a moment and refrain from looking out of the window into the light. These people tried to protect what worked upon the soul at the moment of waking from the rush and turmoil of waking life; they tried to remain quiet for a moment in their darkened room and not look out of the window immediately upon awaking.

It is not too difficult to observe that the moments of waking up and of falling asleep are of a quite special character. But in order to become aware of such things we need a certain wakefulness of thinking. Wakefulness of thinking is a faculty which has never been lacking to such an extent as it is today. I could give you grotesque examples of this. Let me quote one of the banal examples that permeate every-day life and can be met at every turn, as it were.

A few days ago I noticed an advertisement in a newspaper which filled about one eighth of the page. It advertised the wide-spread Memory Course of a man called Poehlmann. It stated that only by employing the method of Herr Poehlmann was it possible to gain influence over other people. No other method would do. I am not speaking now about whether it is permissible or not, whether it is right or wrong to try to "gain influence" over other people; this does not concern us at the moment. I am drawing your attention to the form of the advertisement. It stated: Certain people pretend to be able to gain influence over others by means of personal magnetism or by

strengthening this or that force in human nature. It can easily be proved that these people do not speak the truth, for not one will be able to say that he succeeded through his personal influence in making Mr. Rothschild, or any other rich man, give him a million dollars. Since it is a proven fact that this did not occur — and it certainly would have been tried had there been a chance of success — it is also a proven fact that no influence may be gained over people by this method. Influence may only be gained on the path of science and education. — And then the method of Poehlmann is described.

Now we know that quite a number of people will become convinced through this advertisement that all other methods of trying to influence people are useless, for, has it not been proved that they were unable to influence Mr. Rothschild to leave them his millions? But how many people are there, you may ask yourselves, who read this advertisement and at once raise the objection: does this Poehlmann have students who succeeded in gaining Rothschild's millions? You need only ask yourselves to how many people this obvious thought will occur!

This is a trivial example, but an example which shows you how thinking fails to wake up in regard to what we read. I have chosen this example, first, because of its every-day character, and secondly, because it goes without saying that among those present there is nobody who would fail to observe that even this Poehlmann did not succeed in getting the millions. It is a foregone conclusion that all those who would be taken in by such an advertisement are not present here, and out of politeness I do not mention an example which could appeal to any of my present hearers! But what I want to say is that from morning to night, people read these things. It occurs in countless instances. They say: We pay not attention to them. Is that really so? The other day I read a speech in which the following sentence occurred: "Our relationship with a certain country is the core which must give the direction to our politics in the future." Just imagine the construction of this thought: a "relationship" is a "core" which becomes a "direction"! People who think like this are in a position to do all kinds of things in life! But we do not notice the connections that exist between such crippled thinking and the public life.

It is necessary today to pay attention to this lack of wakefulness in thinking which is a mark of our culture. To have thoughts that can be carried out: this is the first demand if we wish to become aware of the revelations of the moments of going to sleep and of awakening.

I once listened to an address by a very famous professor of literature and history; it was his inaugural address and he tried his best. He formulated all kinds of literary-historical questions and at the conclusion he said: You see, gentlemen, I have led you into a forest of question marks. — I pictured it to myself: a forest of question marks? Just think: a forest of *question marks!*

Only he who is accustomed to carrying through the concepts which arise in him, that is, he who develops wakefulness in his thinking, is prepared to pay attention to such things as the moments of waking up and falling asleep. However, even though something is not perceived, it nevertheless exists. And the intercourse between the human being and the dead exists and is especially strong at the moment of falling asleep and at the moment of waking up. In reality, every human being poses countless questions and gives information to his beloved dead at the moment of falling asleep and receives messages and answers from them at the moment of waking up. This intercourse with the dead, however, may be cultivated in a certain way. We have previously described several ways of cultivating it; today we shall add the following:

There is a certain difference in regard to the thoughts which will lead us to a relation with a dead person at the moment of falling asleep; not every thought is equally suitable. Anyone who does not merely lead a sensual-egotistical life will, out of a healthy feeling, have the longing not to interrupt the relation which karma has brought him with certain personalities who have now passed through the portal of death. He certainly will frequently connect his thoughts with these personalities. And the thoughts

which we connect with our conception of the departed personalities may produce an actual intercourse with the dead; even though we are unable to pay attention to what happens at the moment of falling asleep. Certain thoughts, however, are more favorable than others for such an intercourse. Abstract thoughts, thoughts which we form with a certain indifference, even perhaps only from a sense of duty, are little suited to pass over to the dead at the moment of falling asleep. But thoughts, concepts, which arise from the experience of a special interest which united us in life are well suited to pass over to the dead. If we remember the dead person in such a way that we do not merely think of him with abstract thoughts and cold concepts, but recall a moment when we grew warm at his side, when he told us something dear to our heart; if we remember the moments we have lived through with him in a community of feeling, and in a community of willing; if we remember the times we undertook and decided something together which we both valued and which led us to a common action — in short, something which made our hearts beat as one; if we recall vividly this mutual beating of our hearts: then all this colors our thought of the departed one so it is able to stream over to him at our next moment of falling asleep. It does not matter whether we have this thought at nine in the morning, at noon, or at two in the afternoon. We may have it at any time during the day: it will remain and stream over to the dead person at the moment of our falling asleep.

At the moment of waking up we may, in turn, receive answers, messages from the departed one. It does not necessarily have to be at the moment of waking up that this arises in our soul, since we may be unable to pay attention to it then; but in the course of the day something may arise in our soul in the form of a good idea, an inspiration, we might say, if we believe in such things. But also in regard to this certain conditions are more favorable, others less so. Under certain conditions it is easier for the dead to find access to our soul. The conditions are favorable if we have acquired a clear conception of the being of the departed one, if we were so deeply interested in his being that it really stood before our spiritual eye. You will ask: Why does he say that? I someone was close to us we certainly have a conception of his being! — I do not believe this at all, my dear friends. People pass one another in our time and know each other very, very little. This may not alienate us from the other being here in the physical world; but it alienates us from the being who dwells in the world of the dead. Here in the physical world there are numerous unconscious and subconscious forces and impulses which bring people close to one another, even though they do not want to learn to know each other. It is supposed to happen in life, as some of you probably have read, that people may be married for decades and yet have very little knowledge of one another! In such cases the impulses which bring these people together do not rest upon mutual knowledge. Life is permeated everywhere by subconscious or unconscious impulses. These subconscious impulses bind us together here on earth, but they do not bind us to the being who has passed through death before us. In order to effect such a connection it is necessary that we have received into our soul something through which the being of the departed one lives vividly in us. And the more vividly it lives in us, the easier it is for that being to have access to our soul; the easier it is for him to communicate with us.

This is what I wanted to tell you about the intercourse, constantly occurring, between the so-called living and the so-called dead. Every one of us is in constant intercourse with the so-called dead, but the reason we do not know it is that we are unable to observe sufficiently the moment of falling asleep, the moment of waking up. I have told you all this in order to give a more concrete form to your connection with the supersensible world in which the dead dwell. This connection will take on a still more definite shape if we consider the following relationships:

The young die and the old die. The death of younger people is different from the death of older people in its relation to the living human beings they leave behind. Such things can only be discussed if it is possible to focus one's attention upon definite individual conditions in this field. I describe this not out of a general knowledge, but as a



summary of what has actually occurred in definite individual cases. If clairvoyant consciousness observes what happens when children die, when young people leave their parents and family and pass through the portal of death, and if one learns to know how these souls live on, the knowledge which thus arises may be summarized in the following words:

The consciousness of these young people that have passed through the gate of death may be characterized by saying that they are not lost to the living; they remain here, they remain in the neighborhood, in the being of those they have left behind. For a long time these young people do not separate from those they have left behind; they remain within their sphere — The matter is different in the case of older people that have died. It is easiest to express these things epigrammatically. The souls of these human beings who have died in the later years of their lives do not lose, on their part, the souls of those who have stayed behind. Thus, while those who have remained behind do not lose the younger souls, the older people, after having passed through death's door, do not lose the souls of the living in spite of the latter's being here on earth. They take along with them, as it were, what they wish to have from us. It is easy for them to do so; while the souls of younger people can have what they need from us only if they remain more or less within the sphere of the survivors. And this is just what they do.

It is possible to study these relationships in a way that will ascertain the facts I have just described. The study will, of course, have to be carried out with clairvoyant consciousness. If clairvoyant consciousness studies grief and the pain of separation, it will find that these are two completely different states. Human beings do not know this, but if one observes the grief, the sorrow in the soul of a person over a deceased child, one will find it something quite different from the grief and sorrow which may be observed if an older person has died. Although human beings do not know it, these inner soul states are fundamentally different.

It is a strange fact: If parents mourn a child that has died at an early age, this mourning, as it its actual content and deeper impulse, is only a reflection in the soul of the parents of what the child experiences. The child has remained here and what he feels penetrates into the souls of those who mourn him, calling forth an impulse. It is a pain of compassion; it is in reality the pain or sorrow of the child himself which the parents experience; of course, they ascribe it to themselves, but it is a compassionate grief. Do not misunderstand me, my dear friends; we must take the expression I am going to use in a reasonable sense, without attaching to it any secondary meaning. We might say: If a young person dies we are possessed by the pain from the departed one's soul life (—we are “possessed” in a normal fashion which is not detrimental), he lives on in us, and what expresses itself as pain in his life in us.

It is different when we mourn an older person who has left us. There a pain appears which is not the reflection of what lives in the departed one, for he is really able to receive what lives in our soul; he himself does not lose us. It is impossible for us to be possessed by his pain, by his feelings, for he has no longing to penetrate us with his feelings, for he has no longing to penetrate us with his feelings, because he draws us after him. He does not lose us. Therefore this pain, this mourning is an egotistical path, an egotistical mourning. This is not meant as a reproof, for such pain and mourning are justified; but it is necessary to differentiate between the two kinds of mourning.

After having thus spoken about mourning our departed ones and the way we continue to live with them, let us now proceed in our considerations to the dead themselves. Since the relation to a person that has died in youth is so different from the relation to a person that departed later in life, you will readily understand that there must be a difference in the way of commemorating them. In regard to a child we shall choose the right ritual, the right commemoration, we shall bear him in our memory in the right way, if we take into consideration that the child has remained with us, that he lives with

us and that he loves to become familiar with that which we would have been able to impart to him, had he lived. Experience shows that children after their death long to find in the commemoration which we offer then, general human relationships; they long to find in the funeral service that which is of general interest and has little to do with special interests. Therefore, the Roman-Catholic funeral service is most suitable for children; it is a general ritual, valid for everyone in the same way. A child that has died would like to have a funeral service that is of a general human character, valid for everyone, and not for him alone.

The Protestant funeral service during which a speech is made, entering upon the special, individual life relationships of the departed one is most suitable for the commemoration of an older person who has died. And if we wish to foster the memory of an older departed person, it is best to cling to details of his life which were characteristic of him and to look in his special, individual life for the thought with which we celebrate his memory.

From this you see, my dear friends, that, properly considered, spiritual science cannot remain mere theory. It shows us something of the relationships which exist in the world from which we are separated merely through the fact that we dream away our feelings and sleep away our will impulses. It speaks of the worlds within which we exist with feeling and will. If we take hold of spiritual-scientific thoughts with sufficient intensity, with proper energy, they will not remain thoughts but will act upon feeling and will. — Just imagine the fruitful effect of these ideas upon life! Clergymen who do not adhere to mere abstract theology will be helped by these ideas in conducting funeral services in the proper way and with the proper tact.

This is not surprising; for the world of which spiritual science speaks is the real world in which our feelings and our will impulses live. Thus, what spiritual science is able to give works, in turn, upon feeling and will. It works upon feeling if we develop our feelings in regard to the dead. But it must also work upon the will impulses. We should pay special attention to this in our time. For, my dear friends, if we were to trace the will impulses of the human beings of the present day, we would not come upon very deep regions of the human soul. It is imperative today that men look for spiritual impulses for their external life. As I have already said, people still reject this. But they will have to learn it; for this age will become the great task master for the generation that must live through it, the task master to a much greater degree than has been the case so far.

We shall link our next lecture to the concepts I offered to you today, which were concerned with the individual personal element, and shall then speak about the conditions of our present age from a truly spiritual-scientific viewpoint.

# *The Mission of the Archangel Michael*

Signs of the Times  
Michael's Battle and its Reflection On Earth



*Munich, February 17, 1918*

IT WILL be my task today to proceed in our spiritual observations from the foundations which we laid here the last time to such spiritual processes which lie immediately behind the events our age that speak so seriously to our souls.

If we live, in the sense of our spiritual science, with the forces that stream from the so-called dead into the realm in which we dwell during our incarnation, it is possible to observe with great vividness what it is spiritually that under-lies such a difficult time. To be sure, people of the present age have little longing to know the spiritual background of existence. Such lack of interest is closely connected with the fact that his great catastrophe has befallen mankind in the present age. I have drawn your attention to the fact that in the last third of the nineteenth century, in contrast to earlier periods of time, great changes took place in human evolution. I have repeatedly pointed to the end of the seventies of last century and have shown that the end of the seventies was an incisive moment in the evolution of mankind. Very few people of the present time are aware of the fundamental difference in the spiritual life since the end of the seventies as compared to the spiritual life that preceded it. Human beings lack the perspective to see this; for such a thing only becomes apparent if one is able to observe the differences from a certain distance. If mankind is not to expect still greater misery, this perspective must be gained as soon as possible. For, my dear friends, our present age is governed by a strange and very vivid contradiction. I shall describe this contradiction to you, and you will find it very grotesque: There is no time within historical human evolution that is so spiritual as the time in which we live, the time since the end of the 70's. From a historical point of view, we live in the most spiritual of times. Still, it is an undeniable fact that people who consider themselves spiritually developed believe that our time is completely materialistic! As far as life is concerned, our time is not materialistic; but as far as the belief of many people and its results are concerned, our time is certainly materialistic. What do we really mean if we say: "ours is a spiritual time"?

Well, my dear friends, consider the natural-scientific world conception of the present day; compared to it, the natural-scientific world conception of the past is materialistic. Today we have a natural-scientific world conception which rises to the most subtle, the most spiritualized concepts. We see this if we observe existence beyond the immediate physical present.

Most spiritual conceptions today, although well-meant, mean very little to the so-called dead. But the natural scientific conceptions of the present age, if reflected upon without prejudice, mean extraordinarily much to them. It is an interesting fact that so-called materialistic Darwinism is conceived of and employed in a completely spiritual fashion in the realm of the dead. In full life things appear quite different from the way they appear in the frequently erroneous belief produced by what people experience in the body. What do I really mean by pointing to the natural-scientific spiritual? Well, in order to be able to form these concepts, to rise to such thoughts as are developed today in regard to evolution, and so forth, a spirituality is needed which did not exist in previous ages. It is much easier to see ghosts and to take them for something spiritual than to form sharply defined concepts for that which seems to be only material. This has brought about the fact that human beings develop in their soul life the most spiritualized concepts, and then proceed to deny them. These spiritualized concepts are mistakenly

believed to relate only to material things. The materialistic interpretation of the present natural-scientific world conception is nothing but a denial of its true character. It has sprung from a tendency to cowardice, pure cowardice! One cannot bring oneself to live with one's feelings in these spiritualized concepts and to grasp this spirituality in the rarefaction needed for the forming of clear-cut concepts about nature. One does not dare to acknowledge that one lives in the spirit when one develops these rarefied, spiritualized concepts. One deceives oneself by saying: these concepts relate merely to material things; for this is not true, it is mere self-deception.

The same holds good for other spheres of life. As I pointed out to you the day before yesterday, {Rudolf Steiner, *Das Sinnlich-Uebersinnliche in seiner Verwirklichung durch die Kunst*. Not yet translated. Anthroposophic Press, New York.} many artistic creations of the present time show values through this spiritualized, refined feeling which did not exist in the art development of earlier epochs. This change in the spiritual life has been brought about through a quite definite spiritual event which I should like to characterize today from a certain point of view.

At the beginning of the forties of the nineteenth century, when the middle of that century had not quite been reached, the Archangel Michael gradually rose from the rank of an Archangel to that of a Time Spirit. He began at that time to undergo an evolution which enabled him to work into human life not merely from the super-earthly standpoint, but directly from the standpoint of the earthly. He had to prepare himself to descend to the earth itself, to emulate, as it were, the great procedure of the Christ Jesus Himself, to take his starting point here upon the earth and to be active henceforth from the point of view of the earth. From the forties to the end of the seventies of the last century this spiritual being prepared himself for this task. Thus it may be observed that the period between the forties and the year 1879 presents a significant battle in that super-earthly sphere which borders immediately on the earthly sphere. {See Rudolf Steiner, *Geistige Wesen und ihre Wirkungen*, Vol. II: *Der Sturz der Geister der Finsternis*. (Not yet translated) Anthroposophic Press, New York.} This spiritual being whom we call the Archangel Michael had to fight a hard battle against certain opposing spirits. If we wish to understand what actually happened there, we must consider these opposing spirits.

These spiritual beings who had to be fought by the Archangel Michael becoming a time spirit have always affected the life and evolution of mankind; during the past millennia, prior to the middle of the nineteenth century, their task in the spiritual world was to create differentiation among human beings. Those spiritual beings who are the direct followers of the Archangels strive to lead human beings back to the group soul, to spread uniformity over the whole of mankind. If these beings alone had been active, mankind would have become one indistinguishable species, similar to the animal species, but on a somewhat higher level. These spiritual beings, however, against whom the Michaelic principle had to fight had the task of spreading differentiation among mankind, to split humanity into races and peoples; to bring about all those differences that are connected with the blood and with the nerved temperament. This had to happen. They may be called Ahrimanic beings, and we must realize that the Ahrimanic principle was a necessity in the course of mankind's evolution.

Now at time of great significance arrived in the evolution of mankind, beginning with the forties of the nineteenth century. The time arrived when the old differentiations had to vanish, when the divided human race had to be formed into a unity.

You see, the cosmopolitan views which, to be sure, sometimes turned into cosmopolitan slogans in the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century are simply a reflection of what occurred in the spiritual world. The tendency exists in mankind to wipe out the various differences which were fostered by the blood and the nerve temperament. It is not a tendency of the spiritual worlds to create further differences among mankind, but it is a tendency of the spiritual worlds to pour a cosmopolitan element over mankind. Although, under the impressions of our

catastrophic times, people have little understanding for this, still it has to be stated as a true fact. If this fact, mirrored in the earthly events, is observed in its spiritual background, clairvoyant vision shows that it was the spirit who was to become the time spirit of the modern age that from the forties onward fought against the race spirits, the folk spirits that produced the difference between peoples. What has always been represented by a significant symbol took place here, although at a different stage. The symbol refers also to other stages of evolution, for matters repeat themselves at various stages, and what I am telling you now is only a repetition at a certain stage of a spiritual event that took place at other stages. It is the event that is represented by the symbol of the *conquering of the dragon* by the Archangel Michael. This conquering of the dragon by *the Archangel Michael*, which means that the counter-striving powers have been cast out of the realm in which the Archangel Michael rules, took place in a certain sphere, beginning with the forties of the last century. Certain spiritual beings whose task in the spiritual world it was to divide mankind into races and peoples were cast out of heaven down upon the earth. These spiritual beings who up to the forties produced these differentiations among mankind have no longer any power in the region bordering the earthly world. They have been cast down among men upon the earth with everything they could bring with them.

This is what spiritual science designates as the victory of the Archangel Michael over the counter-striving spirits, which took place at the end of the seventies; the pushing down upon the earth of certain spirits resisting him.

Thus, since the end of the seventies, since 1879, we have two things: we have on earth for those who may be said to be of good will — if we understand the expression in a qualified sense — the rulership of the Time Spirit Michael who enables us to acquire spiritualized concepts, a spiritualized intellectual life. We also have on earth the counter-striving spirits who deceive us into denying the spirituality of the present time. If we fight against the materialism of our time, we should be constantly aware of the fact that we must not fight against what is good in our age but against the lies of our age. For the spirits that have been pushed out of heaven down upon the earth are chiefly spirits of falsehood who, as spirits of hindrance, prevent us from looking for the spiritual in our grasp of natural existence.

If one learns to know those human beings who descended to earthly incarnation from the spiritual world after the year 1841 and who have died since, one can indeed see how these things are considered from the other side, as it were. One is then in a position to correct much of that which here in the physical world, is very difficult to see through.

You see, at the beginning of the twentieth century it gradually became apparent how necessary it is to point again to the most varied fields of spirit in life; and those who drew attention to this fact were the human beings who, after the year 1848 — more precisely, after 1840 — had participated in the hard battle which was carried on by the Archangel Michael in the spiritual world and which ended in 1879 with the casting down of the counter-striving spirits into the life of the earth, where they now are among human beings. One participates in the battle of the Archangel Michael if one rises against these spirits and tries to drive them from the field. {See: Rudolf Steiner, *Goethestudien und goetheanistische Denkmethode*. (Not yet translated) Anthroposophic Press, New York.}

Now, there exists a certain law which states that from every point in world history evolution may be traced in two directions: backward as well as forward. If we focus our attention on any point in the historical development of mankind, we may say: At this point of time this or that happened. Now, as time goes on, the events may be observed; but time may also be observed retrospectively. We may go back from 1879 to 1878, 77, 60, 50, and so on, and may then observe the spiritual world in retrospect. The following then presents itself: In the deeper structure of events as they proceed we may discover

a repetition of what preceded them. If one expresses something great in a simple way, it may easily sound trivial. But I shall speak simply. If we consider the year 1879, we can proceed to 1880, or we can go back to 1878. If we proceed to 1880, we shall observe in the deeper spiritual structure of that year that what has happened in 1878 is still active within it; behind the events of 1880, there stand, as active forces, the events of 1878, and behind the events of 1881 there stand, as active forces, the events of 1877. As we go back, it is as if the line of time reversed itself, and the events which lie back of a certain point of time placed themselves behind the events which lie ahead of that point of time. Much can be understood if we grasp these things.

Now I beg you to remember that I have for many years spoken about the year 1879, and not only since 1914, which would be cheap. This is important, my dear friends, and I ask you now to make a simple calculation with me. Count back from the year 1879, count back to the year which I have often designated as the other boundary. I have always stated that the battle of which I am now speaking started at the beginning of the forties, around 1840, 1941, count back: 1879, 1868, 1858, 1848, and 8 or 9 years more; this is 38 or 39 years. Now count forward: 1879, 1889, 1899, 1909, 1914, and right up into our days (1918), and you also have 38 or 39 years. If you observe the year 1917, you will find a surprising result. You will realize the deep significance of the occultist's statement that, in starting from an incisive historical event, you will find the preceding spiritual event repeated in the subsequent one. Behind the earthly events of our days there stand the spiritual events that began in the forties and which we designate as the Archangel Michael's battle against the counter-striving spirits. These events stand behind present-day events. We have a repetition today of what took place at the beginning of the forties. You can imagine how differently one looks at the events of our time if one pays attention to this law. One will develop a deeper understanding of events that now pass unnoticed, that do not penetrate into one's soul. One will realize that the battle of the Archangel Michael against the counter-striving powers has, to a certain degree, returned to its starting point.

It is, in general, very difficult to speak to human beings of the present day about these deeper relationships, because they violently reject that which would help them to understand the present time and enable them to act in the proper manner. It is necessary today to rid ourselves of old prejudices and consciously to understand the facts.

For things happen here on the physical plane which are of a much more spiritual nature than events in general. This is connected with *the descent of the Archangel Michael* into our earth region. Many people speak of this descent. But if they are seriously called upon to take this fact on its true background, then they do not follow, they do not want to follow. Yet it is extremely necessary that a spiritual understanding of the most important impulses of our age lay hold of ever more extended circles of our contemporaries. Therefore it was very important, during all these years of our group meetings, to draw attention to the necessity of not sleeping away the stream of events which in our time is so strongly influenced by the spirit. For to sleep away events is a characteristic trait of our time. People pass by the events as though asleep, and it can be said that the more incisive, the more significant an event is that enters the physical plane, the more human beings sleep through it.

The events of March, 1917 — if I may indicate a concrete fact {Outbreak of the Russian Revolution. Abdication of the Czar. (Editor)} — were of tremendous significance and will produce results of such great importance of which mankind does not even dream today; and it is really unbelievable how little understanding exists among people for the necessity of a complete revision of their judgments, of a complete revision of all that people have believed prior to 1914.

On this occasion, I may perhaps be permitted to point to the fact that in 1910 I delivered a number of lectures in Kristiania (Oslo) about the European folk souls. In the first of these lectures you may read that human beings will soon be called upon to

understand something about the relations of the European folk souls. {Rudolf Steiner, the *Mission of Folk Souls in Connection with Germanic-Scandinavian Mythology*. Anthroposophic Press, New York.} The following has been repeatedly emphasized in our lectures: turn your gaze toward the immediate East; what happens there is important for human evolution. How often has this been said! Every one of my listeners has heard it. And in the spring of 1914, in my Vienna lecture cycle about the life between death and a new birth, {Rudolf Steiner, *The Inner Being of Man and Life Between Death and a New Birth*. Anthroposophic Press, New York.} I dared to make the emphatic statement that the social life of our time may be compared with a special form of disease, namely, with a carcinoma; I stated that a creeping cancerous disease permeates social life. Naturally, my dear friends, under our present conditions these things cannot be stated in another form; but they must be understood.

We must not think of world events following one another in continuous progression, as historians imagine. They believe that the later event develops out of the preceding one, which has in turn developed out of the one preceding it, and so forth. The prejudice which maintains that the later must develop in the most tranquil fashion out of what preceded it we may leave to those who do not have the sense for reality which is expected of the anthroposophist. We may leave this prejudice to the politicians. Reality, however, is quite different. We must think of the course of events as of a pair of scales in full motion, the scale-beam descending first on the right side, and then on the left. Therefore, the time since the beginning of the forties may be characterized as follows: Great possibilities existed if only the attempt had been made during the period from 1840 to 1914 — the year 1879 divides this period into two parts — to prepare in an adequate manner the spiritualization of mankind which is striven for by the Archangel Michael; if the attempt had been made on a larger scale to imbue mankind with spiritual concepts, spiritual ideas. Mankind, however, must depend in our age on its own free will; and if, out of its own free volition, mankind fails to grasp such possibilities, then the scale-beam sinks to the other side. What could have been reached on the spiritual path is now discharged through the blood. What we experience in our catastrophic times is an equalization of the scales. Mankind who has rejected spiritualization must be *forced* to accept it. This can happen through a physical catastrophe.

This idea may be verified if we place ourselves upon the following firm foundation: We *live* here in this physical world; but we are *awake* in this physical world only through our perceptions and our concepts, as I described the day before yesterday. We dream with our feelings and sleep with our will impulses. This is a matter of course for man. But if we familiarize ourselves, through imagination, inspiration and intuition with the spiritual world which is always around us like the air, and in which the so-called dead exist, together with us, in which their impulses are active, then we perceive how life, here in the physical world, is connected with the life of the so-called dead. The dead are able to receive from human hearts only spiritual thoughts.

Recall what I told you the day before yesterday. I said: If a human being dies in his youth, he has, in a spiritual sense, not actually left his family; he has, in reality, remained here. Something of great importance to the dead is connected with this and I beg you to take this very seriously. For the departed one it is not merely a question of *being here*. For him it is a question of being able to bear this existence. If the dead person is present in a materialistically inclined family which does not cultivate spiritual thoughts, he is constantly oppressed and distressed; the family constitutes a nightmare for him, comparable to the nightmare we experience when we inhale too great an amount of air. Only spiritual thoughts among those with whom he has remained can rid him of this nightmare and make life among them bearable for the departed one.

And again, I told you: If an older person is torn from his family, he takes their souls with him, in a certain respect. He draws them after him; but if they are not permeated by spiritual thoughts, they likewise constitute a nightmare for him.

## RUDOLF STEINER – THE MISSION OF THE ARCHANGEL MICHAEL

Now let us consider the following: We can learn a great deal if we observe the sudden death of a human being caused by outer or abnormal inner conditions. Let us say, a human being is slain or shot. In such an instance, death is brought about in a way which is very different from gradual death through illness. Imagine the following case: A human being is shot in his thirty-fifth year; his life is destroyed through outer circumstances. If the bullet had not struck him (certainly, there are karmic connections, but what I am going to say nevertheless holds good) this human being's constitution might have enabled him to live another thirty-five years. He bears within him the constitution for another thirty-five years. This, now, produces a quite definite effect.

My dear friends, if a human being dies by violence with his life forces are still very active, he has tremendously significant experiences at the moment of death. Condensed into one moment, he experiences things which would have been spread over long periods of time. What he could have experienced during the next thirty-five years he now experiences in a single moment. For the important experience in the hour of death is the following: the human being sees in truth his body from outside; he sees the transition it passes through; he sees that it relinquishes the control of the forces it possessed when the soul dwelt in the body, and that it now becomes a nature-being, given over to the nature forces, to the external physical forces. The tremendously significant experience at the moment of death is that the human being then beholds the relinquishing of his organism to the physical nature forces. If a human being suffers a violent death, he is suddenly delivered not only to the normal nature forces, but his organism is treated by the bullet shot as if it were an inorganic, lifeless body; it is completely relegated to the inorganic world. There is a great difference between a slow death through illness and a sudden death through the interference of the external world with the human organism, be it in the form of a bullet or in any other form. In this moment there is a sudden flaring up, a sudden flashing forth of a tremendous amount of spirituality. The flaming up of a spiritual aura takes place, and the one who has passed through the portal of death looks back upon this flaming up. This flaming up greatly resembles the event that takes place only when the human beings devote themselves to spiritual concepts. These are values, my dear friends, which are interchangeable. It is extremely interesting to see the following similarity: the departed one perceives from the other side the sentient thought which arises in a person when he enjoys or creates an image, a painting, that is born out of spiritual life; the departed one then sees how similar this sentient thought, seen from the beyond, is to the sensation a person has (who is of course unconscious of this) when he suffers an external injury, let us say, to his arm and pain arises from it. There is a great relationship between the two events; one may take the place of the other.

Now you will grasp the karmic connection between the two events. Naturally, quite a number of people knew the "aspect of the stars" when the forties of last century approached. If occultists wish to designate such an event as the battle of the Archangel Michael with the dragon, they do so by using the technical expression: "this is the aspect of the stars." There existed at that time quite a number of people who knew that such a significant event was taking place. There were some who wanted to take precaution, but one of the scales of the balance was too heavily weighted: the materialistic inclination was too strong. Thus the worse measures possible were restored to. People who understand the signs of the times were fully aware of the fact that spiritual life *must* enter mankind. If this spiritual life had entered mankind from the beginning of the forties onward, mankind would have been spared many catastrophes. For what took place *would* have taken place, but in another form. What is karmically necessary happens; but it may occur in various forms. This must always be kept in mind.

I shall express myself more explicitly. There are two ways of thinking about what ought to happen in the social sphere or any other field. We may present a program, may form programmatical concepts; we can think out how the world should develop in a



certain field; this can be presented in beautiful words. We can swear by these words, take them as dogmas, but nothing will result from them, nothing at all! We might have the most beautiful ideas about what ought to happen, but nothing will come of them. Ideas, however beautiful, need not result in anything. Thought-out programs are the most worthless things in life. In contrast to this, we can do something else, and many a person does it without any special clairvoyance. We may, simply through a naïve, intuitive knowledge of the condition of the times, ask ourselves: What is bound to happen in the next twenty or thirty years? What is it that in our time wishes to become reality? Then, if one has discovered what will inevitably happen, one can say to oneself: Now we can choose; people can either come to their senses and guide the course of events in the direction it must take in any case: then matters will turn out well. Or they can fail to do this by being asleep and simply allowing matters to run their course: in which case that which must take place will be brought about by catastrophes, revolutions, and cataclysms. No statistics, no programs, however well thought out, are of any value. Only the observation of what wills to appear out of the hidden depths of the times is of value. This must be taken up into our consciousness; by this the intentions of the present must be governed.

In the forties of the last century the many people who adhered to programs have *won the victory* over the few who understood what I have just stated. From this sprang all kinds of attempts to spiritualize mankind: spiritism (spiritualism,), for instance, is one of them; it is an attempt to spiritualize and reform mankind with inadequate means; to reveal the spiritual worlds materialistically. Even our thinking may be materialistic. It is a materialistic thought that says: This or that particular group of mankind is in the right. Why do the spiritual powers not intervene and help them vindicate their rights? — How often do we hear people say today: Why do the spiritual powers not intervene? The day before yesterday I gave an answer to this in a more abstract form: Mankind today must rely on its own freedom. Those who ask: why do the spiritual powers not intervene? proceed from the assumption that ghosts instead of men should make politics. That would certainly be easy progress if ghosts instead of human beings were to introduce the necessary reforms. This, of course, they do not do, because human beings must rely on their freedom. The expectation of help from ghosts is what most decidedly confounds human beings; it draws their attention away from what ought to happen. Thus the period in the life of mankind in which refined spiritual concepts were gradually developed was precisely the time when mankind was exposed to the strongest materialistic temptations. Human beings simply are unable to distinguish between refined spiritualized concepts and sensations on the one hand and that which, on the other hand, approaches them as temptation and counter-acts the grasping of the spiritualized element within them. Therefore, because people did not comprehend at the right time how evolution must proceed, our catastrophic age, our present difficult times have become a necessity. Without the present hard experiences mankind would have sunk still deeper into doubt of itself. To be sure, it would have developed spirituality, but it would have *rejected* it to a still greater degree.

This is part of the background of historical development. I should like very much, indeed, to throw light from this background upon much that lies in the foreground; but you will appreciate the reasons why this cannot be done in our present age. I must leave it to the individual to illuminate for himself what lives in our immediate present, seen from the background I have just described.

You see, my dear friends, the sleeping away of events which I have characterized causes an inward overlooking of the sharp angles and contours of life. But if we overlook the sharp angles and contours of life, compromises arise. Now, there may be times which are suitable for compromises. The time that preceded the forties of the nineteenth century was one; but this is not true of our time. Our time demands that we see things as they are, with all their angles and contours, in sharp relief; but it also arouses in the human soul the urge — just because of the presence of these sharp

angles and contours — to close its eyes sleepily to them. What I have just stated may be observed even in regard to the greatest, the most significant events in human evolution.

In regard to the greatest event in world history, human evolution has brought about just these angles and contours! Indeed, even in regard to the greatest event of world history, namely, the Mystery of Golgotha. We know all the observations made in the course of the theological development of the nineteenth century concerning the Mystery of Golgotha. From the time Lessing began to speak about the Mystery of Golgotha right up to the time of the theologian Drews, all kinds of statements have been made regarding it. And it may well be said that the whole theological development of the nineteenth century offers complete proof of the fact that people have entirely forgotten how to understand the mystery of Golgotha. But there are some very interesting publications concerning the Christ Jesus. Very interesting publications, indeed! Take for instance, a Danish one {Emil Rasmussen *Jesus, A Comparative Psychopathological Study*.} This Danish publication is written entirely from the standpoint of the modern natural-scientific thinker. The author states: I am a psychologist, a physiologist, and a psychiatrist; I observe the Gospels from this standpoint. And at what conclusion does he arrive? Quite factually, in the sense of modern psychiatric judgment, he arrives at the following one: The picture which the Gospels sketch of the Christ Jesus is a pathological one. We can only conceive of the Christ Jesus as a person suffering from insanity, epilepsy, morbid visions, and similar conditions; he possesses all the symptoms of a serious mental illness. — If one reads the most important passage of this book to people, as I have recently done, {See: Rudolf Steiner, *Geistige Wesen und ihre Wirkungen (Spiritual Beings and Their Effects)*, Vol. IV, first lecture (not yet translated) Anthroposophic Press, New York.} they are shocked. This is comprehensible; for, if what they consider sacred is described as a pathological case, people are horrified. But what are the real facts in the matter? My dear friends, the facts are as follows; Among the great number of dishonest compromisers one arose who takes his stand completely upon the natural-scientific viewpoint; he makes no compromises whatsoever but states: I am a scientist: therefore I must speak as I do; for these are the facts. — If people would place themselves honestly upon the standpoint of natural science, they would have to hold such views. There are these sharp angles and contours from which they cannot escape. They cannot escape unless they forsake the natural-scientific standpoint and go over to the spiritual-scientific standpoint: in this case they will remain honest, — or they may choose to remain honest upon the natural-scientific standpoint; then they are obliged to observe matters, without compromising, in the way of such a scientist who, although entirely honest in his field, is thoroughly limited in his views and does not try to conceal his limitations. He is thoroughly limited, but consistent. This has to be understood. If people would see today what must of necessity result if certain things are consistently carried through, they would see life without compromise.

Someone recently handed me an interesting slip of paper mentioning a book that is already known to me, but since I do not have it with me here, I can only read you what is written on this slip of paper. It was handed to me in order to show me what things are possible today.

“Anyone who has attended high school will remember the unforgettable hours when he had to ‘enjoy’ in his studies of Plato the conversations of Socrates with his friends. Unforgettable because of the fabulous boredom which was engendered by these conversations. He will perhaps remember that these conversations of Socrates struck him as extremely stupid; but, of course, he did not dare utter this opinion, for after all, the man in question was Socrates, ‘the greatest philosopher.’ Alexander Moszkowski’s book, *Socrates the Idiot*, (published by Heysler & Co., Berlin) completely does away with the unjustified overestimation of the good Athenian. In this small, entertainingly written book, the historian Moszkowski undertakes to divest Socrates thoroughly of his

philosophical honors. The title, *Socrates the Idiot*, is to be taken literally. We shall not go wrong in assuming that this book will call forth scientific discussions.”

Now, you will think it dreadful that such things are written. But I do not find it dreadful at all. I think it is self-evident and quite honest of Moszkowski; for, according to his concepts and sentiments, he cannot do otherwise, if he wishes to remain consistent, than to call Socrates an idiot. In doing so he is more honest than many others who, in keeping with their views, should call Socrates an idiot, too, but who prefer to make compromises instead.

I do not need to say, my dear friends, that you should not go out now and spread the news that I am in agreement with Moszkowski when he declares Socrates to have been an idiot. I hope that you understand what I really mean.

But I must acknowledge the fact that people arrive at certain judgments in our time because they make dishonest compromises. It is impossible to think about soul-pathology as modern psychiatrists do and not write a book such as that by the Danish author concerning the Christ Jesus. It cannot be done. One is dishonest if one does not either reject these concepts and replace them by spiritual concepts, or take the standpoint that the Christ Jesus was a mental case. — If one is acquainted with the views of such people, if one knows Moszkowski's opinion concerning the whole structure of the universe, his peculiar views about the theory of radiation and the theory of the quantum, one can appreciate why he, if he wishes to remain honest and consistent, must consider Socrates an also Plato idiot.

What is especially necessary for mankind if the rejection of compromises. Human beings should not make compromises, at least not within their souls. It is very important to consider this as a demand of our age, for it belongs among the most significant impulses of the Time Spirit, Michael, to pour clarity, absolute clarity into human souls. If one wishes to follow the Archangel Michael, it is necessary to pour clarity into human souls, to overcome sleepiness. This sleepiness arises in other spheres also, but above all it is an absolute necessity today to gain insight into the consequences of things. In previous ages this was different. During the centuries prior to the Michael age, in which European mankind was governed by the Archangel Gabriel, the compromises which human beings made in their thinking were lessened by the influence of the spiritual world. Michael is the spirit who works, in the most eminent sense, with the *freedom* of man. Michael will always do what is necessary. You must not believe that Michael fails to do the right thing. In the unconscious regions of the soul of every human being there is today, sharply outlined, every contour and angle of the spiritual life. It is there. Anyone who is at all capable of bringing to the surface what exists in the depths of the soul life as latent visions knows what it is that lives today in the souls as discrepancies and unrelated facts. He knows that in the souls there live side by side the modern materialistic psychiatry which does not shrink from seeing an epileptic in the Christ Jesus, and even the acknowledgment of the Christ Jesus. Anyone who is at all capable of raising these things into consciousness becomes aware of these facts. It would be interesting if a good painter, with a real understanding of our present time, would paint “Christ, seen from the point of view of a modern psychiatrist,” depicting it expressionistically. The result would be very interesting if the painter had a real understanding of what takes place at the present time in the depths of human soul life.

You see, in our time we have to plumb the depths if we wish to grasp what takes place at the surface of existence. But one can understand, on the other hand, that people are seized by a certain cowardice and discouragement if they are to approach the indicated matter.

This is the other quality necessary today: courage, even a certain audacity, in perceiving, in thinking; an audacity that does not dull our concepts but makes them highly acute. Everything that has to be said today may be found in outer events; the spiritual researcher simply describes it more precisely because he sees it against its

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proper background. And if the spiritual researcher then describes this background, the outer events will corroborate all the more what has, for example, been indicated today.

Many people ask: "What shall I do?" It is so obvious what one should do! One should open one's eyes! One's spiritual eyes, to be sure. If one opens one's eyes, the Will follow. The Will depends upon our life situation. It is not always possible in one's particular circumstances, according to one's karma, to do the right thing; but one must try to open one's eyes spiritually. Today, however, the following often happens: If one tries to impart to people in words what is necessary for the present age, they quickly close their eyes, they swiftly turn their minds away from it. This is the descending of the scales on the other side. — What I am saying here might be considered a criticism of our age, but this is not my intention. My purpose is to draw attention to the impulses that must enter human souls, human minds out of the spiritual world, if we wish to get beyond the catastrophic times in which we live. As I have stated, it is not possible to enter into concrete details. Each of you can do that for himself.